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The Church of Tomorrow

By

Joseph Henry Crooker

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THE CHURCH OF TOMORROW

BY

JOSEPH HENRY CROOKER

THE PILGRIM PRESS
BOSTON NEW YORK CHICAGO

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A WORD OF EXPLANATION

THE reader will find some repetition in the pages of this book inevitable because of the close relation of the subjects discussed in its various chapters; no apology is presented for reiteration, for only by "line upon line" can great truths be made effective. It may not be out of place to state here that certain related subjects are either ignored or briefly treated because they have been discussed elsewhere by the writer in *The Supremacy of Jesus* and in *The Church of Today*.

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I. ITS METHOD: DIVERSITY IN FORM WITH UNITY OF SPIRIT

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TOPICS

THE VARIETY IN PRIMITIVE CHRISTIANITY — THE DIVINE METHOD — REASONS FOR DENOMINATIONS — ALL CHURCHES NEED MORE HUMILITY — TOO MUCH EMPHASIS ON AUTHORITY — THE MISTAKE OF THE CATHOLIC — THE UNWORLDLY FRIEND OF THE WORLD — FOUR GREAT WORLD FORCES — THE SCIENTIFIC SPIRIT — THE EDUCATIONAL METHOD — THE PHILANTHROPIC SENTIMENT — THE DEMOCRATIC IMPULSE — ASSIMILATE AND CONSECRATE — DEMOCRACY IN THE CHURCH — DESTITUTION THROUGH DIVISION — FEDERATE AND COOPERATE — BETTER MINISTERS — WISER POLICIES — STRONGER CHURCHES — NOBLER COMMUNITIES — AN END TO WASTE AND DEFICIT — CONDITIONS — CALL FOR VIGOROUS MEASURES — THE BEGINNINGS OF BETTER THINGS — FEWER CHURCHES AND MORE RELIGION — LESS MACHINERY BUT MORE HOLINESS.

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THE CHURCH OF TOMORROW

I. ITS METHOD: DIVERSITY IN FORM WITH UNITY OF SPIRIT

THE Church of Tomorrow will not be one, but many. There has never been *one* holy, catholic, and apostolic church. The primitive churches were various and diverse. Historical research discovers no absolute uniformity even in original Christianity, but rather the exact opposite. The very exuberance of spiritual life, which characterized the apostolic age, like the luxuriance of the springtime, forbade sameness. As the body is not one member, but many, so the early churches, as "the body of Christ," represented diversities of gifts, difference in organization, and divergencies of spirit.

The New Testament itself is a variegated landscape, not a flat plane; and these differences make it all the more interesting and valuable: as they also reveal the more clearly and forcibly the immediate operation of the spirit of God. The new tree of life, to change

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the figure, put out vigorous branches in numerous directions, which bore different blossoms and produced diverse fruits. Stephen early led off in one direction; Peter in another; Paul in another; and the Johannine party, later, in still another: all were rooted and grounded in Christ the Lord, but each followed the heavenly vision in somewhat differing ways and with varying degrees of success.

This original variety was the mark of divinity and the revelation of vitality. There never was, therefore, any absolute apostolic unity, or primitive conformity to one authoritative type of faith or form, which was afterward lost by schism or heresy. There were, instead, differing churches and contending parties, the clash of old and new, the interplay of conservative and radical tendencies, from the very first. This is always God's method. How varied the parties of the reformation! By what diverse methods the democratic spirit is working throughout the world today! As a matter of fact, the doctrine of apostolic unity is simply the dream of enthusiasts, sometimes more arrogant than wise, flung on the dim cloud curtains of antiquity.

As there never was *one* holy, catholic, apostolic church in the past, so there will be none, and need be none, in the future. Such a uniformity in faith and form would be unfor-

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tunate. It would mean the death rather than the triumph of Christianity. The evolution of life everywhere means variety, and the higher the form of life the greater the variety. The freedom which really makes an *individual* widens the scope and necessity of differentiation. The more vigorous the life, the more God-filled the soul, the greater the impulse to vary.

The biologists tell us in these days a great deal about the important part played by what they call "sports": the new forms of organization which come spontaneously into being, and which represent the doors opened by the immanent Creativeness in its continuous effort to mount and meliorate. They operate as prime factors in the process of evolution in both the vegetable and animal kingdoms and are products of that "creative life" which is always on the spot to enable a Burbank to work his wonders. This same immanence of God in the spiritual world is forever pushing men into experiment and adventure, and it makes human progress not only possible but inevitable. So that reasonable variety in religion, the sign of God's presence and the assurance of increasing good, is something to be welcomed and fostered.

It is this creative increment, pushing out to discover new adjustments and establish

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better relations, and leading to infinite variety, that is manifest everywhere in the march of the human race forward. It is this law which makes the march forward possible. Therefore the intolerant demand for sameness in the religious world, if successful, would result in deadness. If all churches should tomorrow adopt one creed, they would at once begin to decline and in a year's time rival and warring factions would arise. Life everywhere thrives by rivalry, emulation, cross-fertilization. Churches are holy, not because alike, but because helpful. They are catholic, not because papal or Protestant, but because hospitable to all truth and inclusive of all men. They are apostolic, not because ancient, but because they send men out into the world as saints and heroes to labor, suffer, and conquer for God and humanity.

If all this be true, then the Church of Tomorrow will not be of uniform doctrine or of identical organization. There will be unity of spirit, but not uniformity of creed or rite or polity. There will be variety, but not intolerance or antagonism. There will be cooperation for holiness, but not conformity of theological opinion. There will be identity of ethical enthusiasm, but diversities of administration.

The truth is that different denominations, as a rule, represent different temperaments,

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different intellectual equipments, and different social conditions; a wide recognition of this fact will make religious people more appreciative of one another, as it is already leading them to work together more and more for common interests. In the spiritual Commonwealth that is coming there will be a glad recognition of the fact that all religious bodies share in the essentials of a common Christianity.

The denominational name which designates a particular group of believers refers, after all, only to a peculiarity which constitutes a very small part of their total religious life. Quakers, Baptists, Lutherans share almost equally in the great fundamentals of Christianity, while these terms refer, in every case, to differences that are very small in proportion to the great religious possessions which are common to all.

Now and then a new sect arises from personal whim or ambition, from peculiar experiences or the over-emphasis of some neglected truth, or from the temporary aberration of an intense and powerful but narrow mind. But, as a rule, these movements prove transitory experiments, and the good which they represent is soon absorbed by older and larger organizations. The great denominations are rooted in the fundamental qualities of human nature, and on this account they are, in a very true sense, divine organizations: a surplus of

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emotional power comes to expression in the Methodist Church; a love for an ornate and orderly service displays itself in the Episcopal Church; a logical acumen and an instinct for strong government manifest themselves in the Presbyterian Church; while a craving for sober simplicity and independency produces all the forms of Congregationalism. But the elements common to all these churches are more in number and greater in importance than their differences. They are all joint heirs to the basic truths and fundamental sentiments which are the essentials of Christianity.

The Church of Tomorrow will, therefore, fail just so far as it indulges in extreme and preposterous assertions of its superiority, its sanctity, or its infallible authority. The measure of its power and prosperity will be in proportion to its humility, its inclusiveness, its catholicity. It must depend, not upon its pretensions, but upon its performances; not upon its antiquity, but upon its activities; not upon its sacramental holiness, but upon its human helpfulness. Its appeal will be effective in proportion to its rationality, humanity, and spirituality. In the long run it will win and hold the esteem and support of the world only so far as it can demonstrate its genuine worth and practical worthiness. Its method of address to the individual reason and con-

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science must have some regard for modern social conditions and intellectual convictions, which are suspicious of mere assumptions of superiority and intolerant of narrowness.

The church is still very seriously handicapped by its unfortunate superstition respecting "authority." This was not a problem that troubled Jesus or Paul, and it need not trouble the Church of Tomorrow. What the church needs is not authority, in the old ecclesiastical sense, but insight, inspiration, power. It need not look back to infallible texts; it must go forward to good life and gracious service. Abundance of Inner Life, represented in a superior personality, is the seat and source of all wholesome and helpful authority. The truth and love which a man sees and lives is that which makes him permanently and beneficently authoritative.

The church of today is weak, not because its infallibility has vanished, but because its inspiration has waned. Other agencies have surpassed it in influence, because they have, according to the popular feeling, outstripped it in reality and usefulness. Physical science speaks with increasing authority, because it actually reveals truth, and because it is able to demonstrate and apply its discoveries. Religion can do the same, if it will adopt the right method. The authority for righteousness is

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as great as that for the law of gravitation. Medical science works with unquestioned authority in these days. It needs no venerable traditions, no proof texts, no papal encyclicals to enforce its decrees. The people yield instant obedience to its beneficent discoveries. The fact revealed is sufficiently authoritative, because the whole universe is behind it. Its application produces actual results. Religion can be as strong when it is as helpful to the soul as medicine and surgery are to the body. It is possible to make as clear a demonstration of the fruitfulness of love and hope as of antiseptics and antitoxins. They are as much a part of the universe as physiological functions. There is as much reason in the nature of things why the minister should possess true authority as the physician.

Again, the state has gained in influence, while the church has lost. And why? Because the state appeals to an obvious fact and provides a practical good. It is effective in its appeal because modern in its method. Moreover, the ultimate source of its authority is not the formulated constitution or even a battleship, but public sentiment: the consciousness of a common life and a common good. So the church may regain its real authority, — true influence, not mere dictation, — if it will

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resort to human experience with equal insight and earnestness. The leverage is different, but people may be as powerfully and as certainly moved in piety as in politics. In fact, if he rightly use his gifts and resources, the preacher may easily surpass the politician in influence, because he has at his command hopes and fears that lay hold of eternity. The Golden Rule has a backing in human experience greater than anything that can be brought to the support of any legislative statute. There is authority enough in the realm of religion if the obvious facts of life be rightly marshaled and persuasively presented. The human soul, now so indifferent to conventional phrase and discredited dogma and mystical rite, will gladly respond to anyone who really speaks the Word of the Lord.

The Roman Catholic is constantly reminding Protestants that they are rapidly failing in their work because they have no authority, while his church is strong because it alone has absolute authority. But an appeal to the facts does not support his claim quite as decisively as he imagines: his assumption *is* an "imagination," not a conclusion from experience. The failure of Protestantism is not quite as obvious as he asserts: its missionaries, its scientists, its philanthropists, its educators, its authors, its scholars fill the earth. Protestant nations,

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whether judged by freedom, intelligence, wealth, progress, or morality, still march at the head of the race. Nowhere have the Protestant churches so lost the confidence of the masses as the papacy has in Italy; nowhere have they such bitter enemies as the hierarchy in France; nowhere have they so little influence over the morals of the people as the Catholic clergy in some parts of South America; and nowhere do they face such grave problems as the pope faces today in Spain. And in the United States the Catholic Church exercises its greatest and best *influence* because it does not attempt to use its old-time *authority!*

Several matters of vital importance the Catholic apologist does not, however, mention when discussing these questions of authority in religion. He does not realize that the Church of Rome has a past from which it cannot escape and which belies his claims. Historical science points to the facts that the so-called Donation of Constantine and the Isidorian Decretals, upon which the papal imperialism built its claims in the Middle Ages, are obvious and acknowledged fabrications. Both Scripture and history refuse to provide any basis for the assumed primacy of Peter. In view of the fact that it has repealed its own infallible decrees, that it looks today with shame upon the bloody ravages of its Inquisition, that it

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is unable at present to get itself believed in scientific laboratories or by the world's most eminent biblical scholars, and that the intellect and conscience of Catholic nations are increasingly rebellious, — in view of these and numberless other similar facts, it seems clear that the boasted "authority" of the papacy is at present more a pretense than a power. Where most needed it is dumb or speaks a discredited word. These statements are made with no uncharitableness of spirit, but with full appreciation of the many valuable services which the Roman Catholic Church is still rendering to civilization.

The Church of Tomorrow must, in all frankness and earnestness, abandon the method of textual and traditional authority in religion if it is to possess regenerative power and ethical influence in the modern world. The mere appeal to authority belongs to a vanished or passing civilization. What it must have, not to *rule*, but to *help*, the world, is the power of the consecrated life, the method which applies the spirit of Jesus to perfect the soul, the appeal to reason and conscience to make character. Luther freed the world by his influence, which his mere authority in later years lessened. Calvin organized Protestants by his influence, which his dogmatism limited. Wesley moved humanity by his influence,

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which has been hindered in its beneficent operation because his followers unwisely used his words as authoritative. What the church needs in order to regain its place in the world as the supreme artist and architect of the "Good Ideal" is not more ecclesiastical authority, but more of the spirit of its Master, actually lived by disciples and effectively applied by them to the serious problems of human society.

The church must not only shun the narrow spirit and the arrogant temper, which have so often characterized its teaching and action, but it must cease to stand aloof from the world, as it has unfortunately so frequently done in the past. It must not separate itself so far from mankind in general as to detach itself from its environment, from the very material with which it must work. It may well hold itself superior to a gross worldliness, but the world is its field of labor. Its contact with men must be immediate and sympathetic. It must not ignore the world's discoveries, or hopes, or heroisms, or sins, or sorrows. To win the people it must be close to them, not with flattery or approval, but with an understanding heart and an appreciative spirit. It must be responsive to tides of the spirit which sweep through universal humanity; it must relate its efforts to the common aspirations of the

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human heart; it must associate itself intimately with all the unconsecrated endeavors of men for human betterment; it must strive, not to coerce the reason or terrify the conscience, but rather to cooperate freely with the common mind and the popular heart, sometimes perhaps to discipline or chasten, but never to subjugate. Finally, while asserting its gospel and urging its claims with all possible vigor and persuasiveness, it must never forget that God has other agencies at work on earth besides religion, while it must always remember that humility on its own part is wiser than intolerance.

These things are always needed to make religion vigorous and wholesome: holding fast to all the good in the past and appropriating all that is better in the present in order to establish the best on earth, the backward look, the receptive mind, the forward push. The church must always utilize the stored energy of history. It must not cut its traditional root or ignore its inheritance from God through the sacrifices and victories of former generations. The sprout from a chestnut stump will, in five years, be as large as the tree grown from the seed in twenty years; it feeds on the stored vitality of the older tree. So, whatever changes we may make in our religion, and to be powerful we must be progressive,

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we must not waste the spirituality conserved in ancient forms and symbols. On the other hand, we must not allow any rite or creed to shut out the light that shines today or silence the cries for help that now reach our ears. Ours must be a new tree of life, but growing both from the roots of the past and also in the providence of the present God. In this connection we may find a helpful lesson in the history of the early church, which carried a fresh ideal and a mighty impulse into the old world; and yet, it grew by appropriating and transforming everything that it could use in its environment, while the essential elements of then existing civilizations survived by being taken up into the life of the church and being given a new form and a nobler application by it.

The Church of Tomorrow must, therefore, look farther than its own threshold and be ambitious to do more than assert its own authority. It must consider the whole landscape of human affairs, and enter sympathetically into all human concerns while keeping close to its own specific task. Moreover, it must study all these serious and numerous human problems in a large and generous spirit. To be most profoundly religious it must realize what a vital and cosmopolitan thing religion, for which it stands, really is;

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and to be most vitally helpful to the world it must thoroughly appreciate what the world actually is and clearly understand its own relation to it. The church, to be catholic in spirit and commanding in power, must interpret its own mission with the most universal terms and call to its service the most inclusive impulses at work among men. Two things are imperative: (1) that it take the most comprehensive view of the character of religion in general, and (2) that it cooperate with the great world-forces operative in the state.

The modern mind sees in religion simply one of the phases of our many-sided human life. We no longer regard it as a mystical factor, forced by some strange irresistible mechanism upon the natural man. Instead, we look upon it as a gracious attitude and activity native to the soul. In this way we give our spiritual life a deeper rootage and ingrain religion into the very essence of things, while in this way, also, we provide a broader and firmer foundation for the church itself.

We have ceased, on the other hand, to think of the church as based upon superstition and built in selfishness, the product of priestly cunning, created simply to keep in servitude the spirits of men. We find rather in all religious creeds and organizations, Christian or otherwise, the flowering of thought and the

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fruiting of sentiment, intent on the training of humanity in the divine life, by symbols that impart sanctity and by services that evolve spirituality. Superstition may exist, here and there, but it is an incidental element due to man's imperfection. It may corrupt or misdirect, but it does not create the yearnings and enthusiasms which give to every faith its motive power. Selfishness may play its baser part in every sacred ministry undertaken in the name of piety, but a purer and mightier influence is always present, purging away the dross and lifting even the selfish man now and then to loving service and holy sacrifice.

We see that all this comes about because every religion is necessarily related to the sum total of the human life of which it is a part. The fiction and folly are in creed and church because they are primarily in human nature, but they operate in the church as in the man himself in subordination to nobler elements, because truth and love are the dominant factors of the soul.

This thought — that our religious life is simply a part of our general life, our piety being linked by many bonds of dependence to the truths seen and the sentiments felt — this discovery has led to a new view of the origin, nature, and ministry of religion itself.

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We see that religion is a constant element in human life. It is not mechanical and intermittent, but natural and continuous. It is not a force that breaks into human affairs to rule despotically, but a pervasive influence radiating like a spiritual magnetism from the upper side of every unfolding experience. It is not a superadded dispensation apart from civilization in general, but the heavenward aspect of our daily conduct, changing with the ebb and flow of our tides of life. In this new light the old debate whether civilization is the product or cause of Christianity seems idle and illogical, for in truth these are not names for separate realms or antagonistic powers, but for associated and related phases of one life.

If the Church of Tomorrow is to accomplish more than is now being done by religion for the human race, it must come into closer touch with all that is best in the world. Its methods must be hospitable to these four imperial factors which are everywhere at work in modern society. And these agencies, by which divine Providence is at present unfolding the humanity of man, are:

(1) *Science*, which is the great revelator, holding out the torch of truth to make plain the laws of God, in which man must find at least a part of his ways of salvation. It sheds

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the light that banishes superstition and it spreads peace where fear once reigned. It pours the riches of the universe at man's feet and arms him with victorious power. It makes infinite the dome of wonder, and it brings inexhaustible material to the altar fires of piety.

Science is not religion, but the Church of Tomorrow must be hospitable to scientific discovery, while its intellectual method must be that of science. The teachings of science are forever changing, and the church need not and ought not to commit itself unreservedly to any specific discovery. But to have any intellectual competence or influence in this time, the religious teacher must respect scientific facts and discuss all problems in a scientific spirit. The preacher injures the cause of piety when he indulges in views which every high-school graduate knows are false. Whatever the message of the pulpit may be, and it will contain elements beyond the reach of laboratory analysis, it must not ignore or contradict the assured conclusions of scientific discovery. Sermons in denial of science have in the past driven thousands from the church. In a scientific age the intellectual equipment and method of the preacher must surely be scientific.

(2) *Education*, which provides the method

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that translates the truth of science into life, and which carries to realization in character the possibilities of the soul. It is the method of Christian nurture as well as secular instruction. The method of the divine incarnation, which lifts humanity Godward and spreads the kingdom of heaven, is not simply a mystical or sacramental process, but the ministry of education in its widest sense, personal and racial. It enriches and disciplines man around the whole circle of his powers and during his entire career, and unfolds and perfects the corporate life of the community as well as the nature of the individual. It is the educational method to which we more and more resort in our efforts to reform the vicious and to improve the defective. The common school is, in many respects, the greatest brain-making and heart-filling agency in the world. The teacher has, in fact, in the eyes of many people, become more powerful than the priest or the prophet. The great need of the hour is not less reliance upon education, but an improvement in methods of instruction. And what is more important still is that the spiritual education of man in the church shall outstrip the secular education of our schools. We do not have too much head training, but we have not made our heart training equally effective. Here is stout argument for giving more attention to the church.

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(3) *Philanthropy*, which is everywhere at work wiping away tears and uprooting the hate and lust that create heartaches. The humanitarian sentiment is sweeping through modern society like a great tidal wave, overflowing desert places with the water of life, freshening arid fields with feelings of pity and sympathy, and bearing men and women everywhere like ships of mercy on voyages of discovery to those in need. A keener sense of suffering, a larger enthusiasm for the prevention of pain, a wider-working hand of helpfulness are active on every side. There is an ever-deepening consciousness of the royalty of service. This humanitarian impulse, indirectly or directly the product of religion, has recently largely flowed outside ecclesiastical channels; but the church must be hospitable to it and utilize it. Philanthropy, to be enduring and most beneficent, also needs the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

(4) *Democracy*, which provides a platform of equity and fraternity where each individual may stand in his integrity, while the emancipating and enriching agencies of science, education, and philanthropy operate to mold him to the pattern of the perfect man. The spirit of democracy is the spirit of equality, which demands that all men, however diverse in their endowments, shall not be restrained in their noble ambitions and lawful endeavors

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by artificial obstacles and fictitious bonds. The way of progress must be kept open and made easy for the feet of the weakest and most obscure child of our common Father. The spirit of democracy is the spirit of independence, which fills the lowliest breast with the consciousness of personal capacity and dignity. The true democrat feels that there is a meaning and purpose within his own being for which he must labor and to which he must attain. The spirit of democracy is the spirit of freedom, which strikes off the chains of custom and the bonds of tradition, setting all doors of opportunity open that each individual may seek and find his best self. The mind shall be free in its thoughts, the heart free in its aspirations, the lips free in speech, and the hand free in labor and service. No man shall say to another, "Your life is mine and you must think and labor regardless of yourself, simply for my good."

And while we must always insist on freedom and independence, we must also remember that the spirit of democracy is the spirit of fraternity, which binds up great masses of people in a common purpose and for a universal good. While it allows no one to say, "You shall be my slave," yet it commands all people to say to every person, "We will be your servants." It enlarges the feeling of kinship;

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it makes plain the unity of social interests; it brings the multitudes together in an inclusive fellowship; it leads all ranks and classes to engage in widest efforts of cooperation for the common welfare. In our evangel of progress we must add the command of loyalty to the plea for liberty.

Now, whatever else the Church of Tomorrow must be, it surely must be oracle and organ of the democratic spirit. While it will not adopt any of the many socialistic programs, it must be the exponent and representative of the social impulse for human betterment. This impulse is, in some respects, the most striking and vigorous religious sentiment at work in the modern world. No wonder that an urgent demand comes from the masses, pleading for a reorganization of religion along more democratic lines. The church must give heed to this demand, and for two obvious reasons: it needs the help of the democratic spirit in its own life, and democracy itself needs the baptism of the spirit of God.

Just here we come face to face with a practical problem of immense importance and no little difficulty — how to make the church democratic without destroying existing denominations. It is obvious that the divisive policy of Protestantism along doctrinal lines not only leads to weaknesses at home and scandal abroad,

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but it is thoroughly undemocratic. Democracy means solidarity, unity, cooperation, as well as liberty and individuality. The larger democratic spirit which is emerging demands that, while the mass must not hamper personal freedom on the one hand, on the other mere personal gain, ease, wilfulness must not stand in the way of the general good. The development of the individual must not be fostered at the expense of the community. No man must push his right, or whim, or dogma so far as to hinder the free growth of all men. The spirit of democracy insists that the ultimate standard is not the maintenance of a creed, but the spiritual good of the whole community; not the glory of an institution, but the welfare of men; not the dignity of a priesthood, but the progress of humanity. Jesus was speaking as a democrat when he said, "The Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath," and we need to add in these days, made, not for the animal, but for the *spiritual man!* The true democracy, therefore, not only stands guard over personal rights, but it demands subordination of private interests to public welfare.

The application of the democratic principle to the realm of religion must be made, and where made it will lead to a reorganization of the spiritual forces of society. To make some theological notion more important than

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the general good of the community is a crime against civilization. To care more for a dogma about Christ than for the cause of Christ is disloyalty to Christianity. To make some private opinion about the Fourth Gospel more important than the gospel of Jesus is unworthy of a modern Christian. Difference of opinion respecting obscure texts and metaphysical problems ought never to bar any man from the church of God. The fellowship of the spirit ought never to be limited by dogmatic tests. A church has no right to exist simply to perpetuate a ritualistic or theological oddity.

The spirit of democracy does not presume to pass judgment upon any man's faith, but it does insist that no body of people has the right to subordinate the general good of the community to the mere assertion of peculiar theological opinions. The spirit of democracy does not demand that any denomination shall go out of existence, but it does command, with a good deal of vehemence, that the moral and spiritual waste incident to sectarian zeal shall cease. What is imperatively needed in the religious world today is not abolition of reasonable variety, which exists even inside all denominations, but cessation of harmful rivalry and injurious overlapping. Differences need not be obliterated, but the agencies for righteousness must be wisely federated. Democracy

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does not ask that any man renounce his creed, but it insists that he remember that his neighbor also has a creed, and more than this, that the two work together for humanity.

How far short the churches of the average community come of fulfilling the democratic ideal, and how they at present fail to federate the religious forces of the world and make them effective, may be made clear by a few simple illustrations. When, for instance, the village fire-bell rings, the alarm which it sounds brings every citizen to a full consciousness of a common danger, and an instantaneous effort is made by all to put out the fire. No one stops to consider whether the man whose house is in flames is a Jew or a Gentile, rich or poor, saint or sinner, believer or unbeliever.

In that moment the instinct of humanity asserts itself, and brushing aside all the superficial distinctions and all the ecclesiastical prejudices which rule our daily routine of life, it marshals every person in one great effort to suppress a common danger. In that critical hour men work vigorously side by side as men, no one stopping to think whether his neighbor has been sprinkled or immersed, whether he believes in the deity or only in the humanity of Jesus. If a Baptist or a Unitarian refused to work with another man because that neighbor believed differently about pre-

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destination or probation, he would cover himself with the contempt of the community. The democratic spirit is here in full play.

When the village school-bell rings, out from all the homes round about the children start with a common purpose towards a common temple of learning. The mother's darling and the father's pride go forth from squalid hut and elegant mansion. From modest houses made beautiful by the refined and noble character of their occupants, from elegant residences made desolate by devouring greed or destructive sensuality, from homes full of prayerfulness, and from homes full of frivolity the children gather in the schoolhouse to sit side by side, to study the same books, and to drink the water of life from the same fountain. This clarion call of Wisdom, rung by the school-bell, is not addressed to Methodist or Lutheran, neither to believers nor even Christians is it sent, but to the sons and daughters of man. It is the imperial summons of that truth which is as catholic as nature and as unsectarian as God. Moreover, it is proclaimed with equal urgency and directness to every child; and in that schoolroom we have an anticipation of the kingdom of heaven. The beliefs of each tiny infant are respected; no child is allowed to ill-treat his neighbor on account of differences of religious faith, and all children

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sit there side by side in the sacred fellowship of education, studying and reciting together as members of one family. They are not indifferent to religion and not destitute of religious convictions; yet the right of each soul to its own private opinion is by all held sacred.

Among these children in the schoolroom the Dayspring from on high begins to dawn towards a universal recognition of the unity of humanity. The democracy of God is being revealed and realized. These children are learning to know one another not as Irish or German, not as Trinitarian or Unitarian, but as human beings. Also, they are learning how unsectarian Truth and Goodness are; and most certainly if Jesus of Nazareth walked among men today, he would straightway go into the schoolroom and say, "Here more than anywhere else is my gospel lived."

But when the schoolhouses are closed, when the peace of the Sabbath morning has spread its hush over the country-side and the village church-bells ring — then what a remarkable change occurs! The two neighbors who worked side by side the night before to put out the fire hurry off to churches which refuse to unite in a common effort to put out the fires of intemperance that are destroying our youth, while children who study and play together on week-

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days are told by their respective pastors that their companions are surely on the broad road to perdition. These church-bells produce in men and women the feeling that they are first of all Baptists or Methodists or Lutherans, so that on Sunday morning artificial and irritating lines of division are tightly drawn; men dress themselves in garments of exclusiveness never worn on the market or in the social circle; and the boy whose loved seat-mate at school the year round is a Jew carries under his arm a Sunday-school lesson-paper which declares that all such unbelieving Jews shall be forever damned.

The fire-bell called aloud, "Come, every man, and subdue the common danger"; the school-bell rang out, "Come, every child, to the temple of wisdom, and grow strong and noble"; but the church-bells call, "You who are immersed, come hither and pray by yourselves; you who believe in election, worship here; you who belong to the one, true, apostolic Episcopal Church, gather here." And in the reverberation of each church-bell we hear the sad undertone of the damnatory clauses of the creeds, "Those who do not so believe, God will turn into hell."

The fire-bell arouses men to the sense of a common humanity, and the response to its alarm is instant and universal. But is a man on fire

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with a passion for drink, or blinded by ignorance, less worthy of a united effort on the part of the whole community than a burning dwelling? Is there any cogent reason why men should be more exclusive and less inclined to cooperate with each other in their work for the suppression of the moral and spiritual dangers which menace society than in their work against fire and flood and epidemic? The secular school-bell proclaims the unity of humanity and shows forth the Fatherhood of God, but the church-bells have often been so rung as to make people forget their identity of origin and destiny by gathering them within high-fenced folds into which no person can enter except upon profession of faith in certain theological notions. *But is there any valid reason why we should hold dogma so dear and manhood so cheap?* Is there any good reason why religion should break up that fellowship, founded upon humanity, which exists in commerce and society? Is there any substantial reason why men who are good enough for association in every other relation should be called unworthy of church membership? Is there any sound reason why men who cooperate in behalf of the interests of education should refuse to cooperate to advance the cause of Christ?

The church-bells so often sound the signal

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of division and strife because each church gathers people into a company which is more or less intolerant towards all other sects. The time has come when religion to live and prosper must, in its spirit and organization, be as democratic as the world at large. The inclusive humanity of secular affairs ought to put to shame the churches of the land. But church-bells may ring in harmony as well as in dissonance, and each church may mark simply *a different post of duty* rather than what is so often claimed to be the *one portal to heaven*. The trouble is not, primarily, that there are too many churches, or even that they differ so widely in policy and faith, but that they are organized upon a false basis, and are led by that very fact to work against each other. No traveler into a far country on a sultry day ever complains that there are too many shade-trees by the roadside; but if a guardian stood under each tree, throwing stones towards the next tree and refusing to let anyone enjoy the shade of his own tree unless he professed a certain belief, it is probable that a great many travelers would take to the middle of the road and try their chances there — just as many good men have left the churches and taken to the common highway of humanity.

The chief complaint, then, is not that there are too many churches — though there are

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undoubtedly too many sects represented in our towns and villages — but that churches are not properly organized; that religious fellowship is so interpreted and exercised that it destroys the unity of humanity, while it wastes the forces which ought to be making for righteousness. Our cooperation for holiness is not sufficiently humane and catholic and democratic; it keeps too close to superficial distinctions, while it follows a policy which is radically wrong, because it makes theological opinion more important than life in the spirit of Jesus.

The church that is comparatively small in numbers is not necessarily weak or ineffective. It is often a superior training school of life, because of its social warmth, its freedom from conventionality, its intimacy of association, and its liberty of growth. The great reform movements of Christianity have come, not out of cathedrals, but out of conventicles. But where communities are religiously disintegrated and separated into numerous bodies along sectarian lines, a situation is created which is unfortunate for the cause of religion and harmful to every civic interest. The function of the church is to send out into the world superior men and women with piety and character *who shall do things:* even all the things that may be necessary for the good of man and

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for the glory of God. But as often happens today, the church provides little real religious nurture because its energies are chiefly spent on money-getting, its narrow spirit and its petty methods alienate many of the best and ablest people in the town, while its minister has neither the spiritual power nor the intellectual culture to commend religion to the reason or to win the heart to righteousness.

The Church of Tomorrow must put an end to the waste of spiritual energy and the injury to the cause of religion due to the divisive and dogmatic policy of extreme Protestantism. Fewer churches working in harmony will mean stronger churches. Stronger churches federated in every noble cause will mean abler ministers: superior young men will be attracted to the pulpit, because it will seem more worth while to be there, when freedom shall be granted for prophecy and freedom also from financial stress. And stronger men in the pulpit will mean more respect for religion in the community; more ethical authority operative among young people; more attention to the church among business and professional men.

Also, this new condition of affairs when established will mean less unseemly financial methods for supporting the gospel; less neglect of true Christian nurture in order to scrape

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together a few pennies to meet the annual deficit; and less restlessness of pastor and parish, leading to frequent changes, often disastrous to both. We must have a new administration of religion that shall make it easy for every right-minded person to work in the church and certain that the strongest man in the land stand in the pulpit, and when there that he shall have all the support, financial, moral, and social, that he needs in order that he may do all that his heart prompts for his community.

In the Church of Tomorrow, then, we must have a clearer recognition of Christian unity, which will mean the federation and cooperation of all the churches against the manifold evils of the world and for the upbuilding of the kingdom of God on earth. The gigantic iniquities of modern society are thoroughly organized and directed by able leaders. To accomplish its high purposes, the army of the Lord must excel all other organizations by the effectiveness of its methods and the wisdom and power of its representatives.

Nearly all communities, especially towns and villages, are, at present, over-churched. There are too many churches, standing too far apart, unfortunately neglectful of one another, and shamefully neglected by the strong men who ought to be pillars in them. The average

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man is often not even an ornamental gargoyle listlessly gazing from the outside at passing spectators! These things ought not so to be.

The spiritual harvest in many places is small because the laborers are too numerous: too many who are inefficient and working in narrowness and at cross-purposes. The results in many villages and towns are most lamentable. Subdivision has brought about a condition of real religious destitution. The policy has resulted, in many cases, in weak ministers and weaker churches. What else can follow, when the little church pays the minister not as much as a hod-carrier receives? And in order to do even this, the church devotes the most of its energies — that is, its self-sacrificing women — to catch-penny enterprises which are in no sense religious work. The representative of religion is often without authority of culture or inspiration of character, while his congregation is more worried over an impending deficit than about the moral condition of the young. The Church of Tomorrow, by always having a spiritual surplus, will never be troubled with a financial deficit!

The present situation has some very serious and alarming features: (1) Competent young men are often deterred from entering the ministry, not only by salaries too small for the decent support of a family in these times

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of excessively high prices, but chiefly by a church policy which clips the wings of every noble ambition for social service and cramps all activities to the narrow limits of petty parochial financiering. (2) The very people who are most needed in the church, and who could do the most for it, are often alienated from religion by pulpit services that do not satisfy their intelligence and by church policies that offend their sense of propriety.

This grave situation, especially the religious destitution of villages, the Church of Tomorrow must remedy. And the relief will come, not from the extinction of reasonable denominational enthusiasm, but from the outgrowth of sectarian zeal and the development of Christian charity leading to church federation. The remedy will not be found in creed revision or creed negation, but in a new attitude toward all forms of doctrine. The church undoubtedly needs to revise its creed; or, what would be better, to make simple discipleship of Jesus the test and object of church membership. But more than this, it needs to relocate its emphasis and replenish its power. It must broaden its horizon and quicken its sympathies. It must readjust itself to new conditions and restock its armory with more adequate weapons against existing evils.

Many influences are already at work con-

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tributing to a removal of these deplorable conditions, but the highway leading onward to larger conquests for the gospel of Jesus lies not so much in amalgamation as in mutual appreciation; not new machinery, but a fresh dynamic; not a more elaborate ritual, but a resort to fundamental principles; not a new policy that will fill the treasury, but a forceful preaching that will bring sinners to repentance.

When we shall have two or three strong, federated churches, where there are now from five to seven weak ones, working separately, or in opposition and by petty financial methods; when more is spent for genuine Christian nurture in the Sunday-school than upon the choir; when these religious societies are liberally supported by the direct generosity of the men, instead of compelling their wives and daughters to earn a large part of the minister's salary by indirect and often unseemly methods (financially as wasteful as religiously humiliating); when the minister is given liberty to prophesy, freedom from harassing financial anxieties, and encouragement to do large things for the whole community; when the average man shall come to realize that the minister needs, not only his physical presence at church, but needs him there as a devout worshiper, that the community needs him there to uphold the safeguards of society, and that his own children

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need him there to give them, by his example of personal interest in religion, the most valuable part of their education; when churches themselves shall clearly see and profoundly feel that training souls in the spirit of Jesus is more important than theological exclusiveness and that being a Christian must mean a nobler citizenship, a purer home, a juster business policy — then the best and strongest young men in the land will be crowding our theological schools; then the pulpit will speak with new power to the conscience and reason of mankind; then the religious education of the children will be something more than a farce; then politics will be cleaner and the evils of drink and sensuality will lessen; and then there will be a rebirth of Christianity, which will surpass in glory and effectiveness the reformation of the sixteenth century.

We must, therefore, restating and emphasizing the important truth under discussion, have more power in the pulpit and more piety in the pews before we can have better government, fewer saloons, fewer divorces, and better business methods. We must have better churches, with wiser leadership, nobler policies, and closer cooperation, before we can have a higher civilization; and we must have fewer churches, appealing more effectively to all good people, before we can have these wiser

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ministers and stronger churches. To make the victorious Church of Tomorrow out of the ineffective churches of today, we need, not only reorganization, but regeneration: not so much ecclesiastical mechanics as spiritual dynamics. We need today, in religion, intensive rather than extensive policies. Not simply reaching *more* men through suppers and clubs, but providing the world with *better* men. Not simply having more *wheels* in the machinery of the church, but making the *output* of religious service of greater civic and ethical value. The primary and imperative need is, in short, not getting more people to profess belief in metaphysical propositions, but sending forth into the world more men and women filled with the spirit of Jesus Christ.

The supreme test of the Church of Tomorrow will not be the number of hours that it is kept open, the attraction of its soloist, the appurtenances of its kitchen, the size of its men's clubs, the variety of its philanthropic activities, or the success of its annual bazaar, but rather the number of persons whom its services have brought to repentance of sin, comforted in sorrow, cheered in hardships, filled with love of Jesus, and sent forth into the world's work to live the Golden Rule.

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II. ITS TASK: FEEDING THE ROOTS OF LIFE

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TOPICS

THE AIM OF ALL INSTITUTIONS AND AGENCIES — RELIGION AND THE ROOTS OF LIFE — THE SUPREME MINISTRY OF THE CHURCH — POPULAR DENIALS OF SPIRITUAL ROOTS — DOES LIFE ROOT IN "THINGS"? — ROOTS NEGLECTED FOR BRANCHES — TOYING WITH THE FRINGES OF LIFE — PERSONALITY DETERMINES WORTH OF SERVICE — A SIGNIFICANT INCIDENT — IS DR. BRUCE RIGHT? — ESSENTIAL RELATION TO SOCIAL PROBLEMS — THE CHURCH AND SOCIALISM — MORE THAN A GOOD SAMARITAN — SOCIALISTIC CRITICS OF THE CHURCH — THE ECONOMIC PANACEAS — GROWING SOULS COMPEL SOCIAL BETTERMENT — PHYSICAL CONDITIONS AND CONSECRATED HEARTS — REAL POVERTY AND ENDURING RICHES — DRUNKENNESS AND WANT — THE CHURCH NO RESPECTER OF PERSONS — DYNAMIC CHARACTERS OF HISTORY — FALSE VIEWS OF HUMAN MISERIES — WHAT COLLEGE GRADUATES DEMONSTRATE — THE OLD EVANGEL STILL ADEQUATE — THE WESTERN FLOWERING FROM NEW ENGLAND ROOTS.

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II. ITS TASK: FEEDING THE ROOTS OF LIFE

THE task of civilization is to feed the roots of life. This is the supreme purpose of the nurture of the family, the sports of the playground, the training of the school, the traffic of the market, the administration of justice, the strife of politics, the practise of medicine, the ministries of art, the operation of agriculture. To feed the roots of life of the rising generation parents sacrifice and teachers toil. To feed the roots of life scientists investigate and statesmen legislate. To feed the roots of life prophets plead and poets sing.

At the bar of every passing judgment day all social institutions must justify themselves by their fruitfulness. What effective service have you rendered to humanity? But the source of efficiency is in the roots of life, our heredity from God plus our nurture and our endeavor. Inheritance is the tap-root with us all, and the means of culture, social and personal, are the fertilizing influences which feed our roots of life. If we blossom in the beauty of holiness it is because our Inner Life has been enlarged and enriched. If we fill our neighborhood with the sweet fragrance of a

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saintly life, it is because the deep sources of our being have been stirred and sanctified. If we bear much fruit in character and service, it is because the possibilities of our human nature have been unfolded by devotion and discipline.

It is the root that bears the fruit, not the fruitage that determines the rootage. We are forever forgetting the Master's fundamental directions respecting the methods of the divine life: Make the heart right and then righteousness will abound. "Cleanse *first* that which is within the cup!" Put love in the breast and then it will shine in the eye, speak from the lips, and work through the hands. The feet will run on errands of mercy if the soul is merciful. If the tree begins to decay, dig about its roots and feed them, then the branches will be laden with fruit. Whatever else may be necessary, the supreme necessity is increase of Inner Life through feeding the roots of our being.

Growth the method of the kingdom of God? Yes! But growth up from roots deeply embedded in the life of God. Purity the condition of the kingdom? Yes! But there can be no continuing or persuasive purity of speech or action until every source from which the heart draws its life has been purified. Love the motive of the kingdom? Yes! But love is soul-life which can exist and operate in us

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only as we take into ourselves the love of God from our spiritual environment, as the root feeds on the soil in which it is embedded. Service the expression of the kingdom of God within us? Yes! But we serve in the line of our ambition and in proportion to our ability. If that ambition be divine and that ability abundant, our life must root in God and the rootage of our life must be carefully and constantly nurtured. Character the end of the kingdom of God? Yes! But character is simply the structural expression of what is inherent, abundant, and dominant in us, — and this life is in us and radiates from us because our being is perpetually nourished through the immediate ministration of the spirit of God. We have a divine character only as we have fed upon the truth and love of God.

Of all the institutions in the world engaged in feeding the roots of life, the church is supremely necessary and gloriously serviceable. This statement does not depreciate the home. But the appeal to history shows that the church is the guardian of all domestic sanctities, which wither wherever religion decays. Domestic improvement always follows missionary triumphs. A better home does not bring barbarians to Christ, but Christian nurture does make nobler family life inevitable. The only sure cure of the evils of divorce, which

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grievously afflict us today, is not a new statute, however good in itself, but a new heart filled with the spirit of Jesus. We may be sure of domestic felicity wherever the spirit of the Lord presides.

When we emphasize the importance of the church, the benefits of education are not belittled. The fact is, however, that religion is the deeper root, and it bears education. Historically the college follows the church. Institutions of learning are branches on the tree of life, planted and nourished by men of piety. Evangelists are the pioneers the world over, and the pedagogues tread in their footsteps. Or, when evangelists found schools and in the spirit of old John Cotton first attempt to civilize, it is usually love of Jesus that organizes education and works through education in order that the people in the end may be Christianized.

Moreover, not only does piety bear schools as a tree bears fruit, it is the religious motive and quality at work in education that give to the training of the young the spirit that makes knowledge a power for good. Not didactic and dogmatic instruction, but the influence of the religious spirit incarnated in a noble personality. The merely secular training of the school imparts facts and develops intellect, but religion alone makes sure that these facts

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shall become the structure of a noble character and that the mental power shall be the servant of the moral ideal. Education places an invaluable tool of life in the hand of the young, but only the ministry of piety in the heart can insure the wise use of that tool. Religion transmutes the knowledge of nature into the wisdom of life. To learn the laws of the universe is only the less important half of culture. The diviner part is so to feel their moral importance that we shall gladly live them.

Our education at present sadly lacks the human element: it trains the young too much simply for livelihood and not enough for life. Research work in a laboratory is a useful employment, but as a rule its ethical value is comparatively small. As a preparation for many of the supreme moments of life, a year so spent is not so valuable as a week's communion with Socrates, a day's fellowship with Jesus, or a passing baptism of the Holy Spirit, which turns prodigal feet homeward or inspires careless hands to sacrifice for God and man! What this age most needs is to be educated by the yoke of Christ: "Take my yoke upon you and learn of me." What glorious life-lessons the true disciple does, indeed, learn of Jesus: submission that gives strength, surrender that means victory, service that brings joy!

It is, therefore, to the church that we must

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look as the institution which does most to feed those deep roots of life upon which character and destiny depend. All this comes about, not because piety is the only precious thing in life, but because it is the peculiar function of religion to develop feeling and sentiment, to brace and move the will, to create and apply motives, to discipline with fear and uplift with hope, to enlarge and chasten the heart life, to enthrone and execute noble ideals.

The church, as the agent of religion, goes down into the very depths of human life with a recreative, cleansing, and inspiring power which no other institution exercises. It touches springs of life that no secular mechanism can reach. It opens floodgates of spiritual power that is irresistible and that no other agency ever so successfully brings to bear upon conduct and character. It speaks a word of authority before which monarchs tremble and thrones crumble. It deals with things unseen, but immortal; immaterial, but invincible; ideal, but eternal. And all this just because its maker and builder is God and its horizon is infinity. From its very nature, as representative of the Almighty and as fashioner of the destiny of man, it feeds the roots of life as nothing else possibly can.

The whole world is witness and illustration of this statement. All those interpreters of

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life are, indeed, blind who fail to realize that religious sentiment is now, and always has been, the mightiest power on earth. For its sake home, country, life itself has been sacrificed. It speaks and the hardest tasks are heavenly joys; it calls and no man dares to disobey; it commands and innumerable heroes still circle the earth. Its very superstitions reveal its superlative power, while its instruments of torture report its resistless grip upon man, even in its worst mood. So strong is it that when perverted it can actually dehumanize man himself. And there is no more probability of its being outgrown today or tomorrow than there was in the distant ages of the Pharaohs.

A single example will make this clear. In two neighboring New England villages, academies of practically the same scholastic rank have existed for many years. One has had the support of a strong, spiritual church. The community in which the other is located has been comparatively destitute of the religious element. The careers of the men and women who have come out of the academy, where the church by its side has been feeding the roots of life, make a record far nobler than that of the graduates of the other school. The environing piety gave to education its finer quality and its larger fruitfulness.

But, unfortunately, there are many persons

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of large influence among us who deny that man has any spiritual rootage; and if this be true, then all religion is pure superstition and the church a mere cumberer of the ground. Some eminent college professors are teaching the rising generation that human life does not have any such roots as the affirmations of religious faith imply. They dynamite the soul and distribute its powers and faculties among the casual products of chemical action. The thought of Newton and the love of Christ are classed, by them, with the wriggle of worms and the whirl of insects. They assert that man is a mere machine. But the dumb machine itself rebukes their materialistic sophistry. It exists as a machine, because the product of intelligent purpose, and to be a successful machine, rational power must operate through it! An explanation of human life which leaves out all that is supremely and distinctly human is neither good science nor sound philosophy. Such a view of human nature provides no true method of education, no adequate motive for philanthropy, and no enduring basis for civilization.

The soul refuses to be thus annihilated. To obliterate it is to destroy the only basis of science itself. And the interpretation of human nature necessary for the laboratory provides foundation for altar and temple. The

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man at the telescope is more than the ray of light from Sirius which he interprets. The captain at the wheel of the steamer is more than the chemical action in the burning coal under the boiler. We must have an interpretation of human life large enough to include the soul if art, learning, and civility are to continue. To leave it out is to ignore the supreme Reality and become supremely unscientific.

To find the truth of things we must have a discoverer, who is more than "a thing." To interpret is more than simply to see and to hear: it is to find something greater than the things themselves — their laws, relations, meanings. This is the office of mind, with spiritual roots linking it to the infinite Mind. Mere observation of things could never produce science; for to reach that, exploring intellect must interpret the facts observed. In truth, a mere "thing" cannot *observe* other things! Science itself grows, not by mechanical addition of fact to fact, thus making a bigger card-catalogue of observations, but by discovery: the entrance of thought to interpret observation.

The universe is dead, like the unlighted electric tower at the Buffalo Exposition, until the illuminating current of thought is turned upon it. Thus the possibility of science de-

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pends upon the reality of the human soul. The supreme function of science is not simply to observe, but to deepen the spiritual roots of life. The larger science issues evermore from the enlarged mind. The materialistic biologist or psychologist, if he has his way, will soon cut the root from which discovery springs. A dethroned soul will cease to be a successful truth-seeker. The great characters of history are those who have believed most in the soul: men who have trusted its ethical affirmations and fed its spiritual roots. The world has always loved and honored most those who have made men feel their relations and obligations to God — a wonderful testimony to the verity and reality of our spiritual nature.

Many persons, unfortunately, leave no place whatever for the soul in their program of life. They ignore its affirmations and aspirations. They turn their back upon the Bible, the oracle of the soul; upon Jesus, the Master of Inner Life; upon the church, whose special ministry is to feed the spiritual roots of life; upon hope of immortality, which lifts the task of the passing moment to the glowing horizon of eternity; and upon worship, through which the spirit of man is refined and enlarged by communion with the infinite Love.

But a life-program that neglects the soul is like an engine-builder who makes no provision

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for the steam by which to run it. We touch here that policy of outwardness in life which is always the curse of the world. These people expect to pick roses without ever paying any attention to rose bushes. They assume that they can enjoy the blessings of Puritan virtue without devoting themselves to the Christian nurture out of which alone the glory of the Puritan springs. They want to trade with an honest market-man, but they do nothing to enlarge the sources of public morality. They desire their children to resist evil, but they have never led them in services of prayer, which prepare the heart to overcome temptation. They wish to live in a community where life and property are safe, but they do nothing by family devotion or public worship to nourish the roots of that religious life which, more than bolts and bars, is the protection of the community.

This blindness to the real sources of life is met in the popular plea of the superficial optimist: "Wear a smile!" But the smile that is merely "worn" gives the face a most repulsive expression. This plea begins at the wrong end. A true smile is more than skin deep; it is a revelation of the soul. It is not the face that smiles, but the spirit of the man. Noble features do not make great souls, but saintly souls make beautiful faces. It is a

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foolish ambition to try to make the world good by "wearing" a smile; the world will wear a smile if we are good! The peace of God is not spread like a blanket over society. It comes up, like the glory of the spring landscape, from innumerable roots that run from human hearts into the infinite Heart. To increase the beauty of the world these heart-roots must be fed by the spirit of him whose life was the Beauty of Holiness. To make faces smile with a divine attractiveness that shall be permanent we must enrich the spiritual roots of life by the repentance that strengthens the will against sin, by the forgiveness that washes away selfishness, and by the love that prompts service.

We have earnest men among us who contend that the real roots of life are material conditions. They center their attention on the physical basis of life, and they see little or nothing else. To them the environment is everything. To bring in the kingdom of man there must be a redistribution of the products of labor, and by labor they mean little more than handcraft, all wealth consisting in worldly possessions, and all happiness in physical comfort. The superintendent of the schools of a great city was recently heard to remark, "We are trying to train the rising generation so that men may live a *comfortable* life!" What an ignoble

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view of his responsibilities! What would a Cromwell, a Washington, or a Lincoln think of such a remark? Just to be "comfortable"! To double a man's wage without much reference to skill or service; to move the family from a three-room tenement to a five-room house, with no necessary improvement in manners or morals; to substitute broadcloth for homespun, regardless of the quality of the heart that beats within the clothes; to take the abnormal, and perhaps unjust, income of the millionaire and divide it among his operatives, leaving them in all their old habits — to do these things would mean, according to his gospel, adequate human progress.

But are the real roots of life in mere things? Is the problem of life as simple as this, the methods of progress as materialistic as these theories imply? The importance of environment is obvious. But is it exclusive and supreme? A better wage is good, if it goes along with more goodness. But does the better wage necessarily make better life? A juster distribution of profits is most desirable. But would this simple economic operation deepen and purify the springs of joy? Is it not true that a wider distribution of truth and love would mean the greatest help to civilization? To equalize opportunity and develop spirituality will give more enduring happi-

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ness than equalizing bank accounts. Increase of wages is only one of the fractions of life. The plea for social betterment, which glorifies the fruits of the spirit, but ignores their source in the depths of the soul, is not a gospel which correctly interprets life or successfully develops character.

To feed the roots of life we must go into the heart rather than into the pocket. And the church of Christ is the one institution that most effectively recreates the human heart. As Jesus represents the Heart of God among men, he is the supreme inspirer and chastener of man's heart. The expectation that blessedness lies in what a man gets is the deadly superstition of the market-place, more harmful than any theological vagary. Larger tenements for laborers? Yes! But it would be better for many a family to move into a smaller rather than a larger house, if more hope, faith, and love should issue from this domestic change. Automobiles for all? Yes! But it would be better for everyone to go afoot in righteousness than to ride far and wide with a dying conscience and a hardening heart.

It is the fashion of the hour to neglect the roots of life for the branches. The heart of man has become exceedingly sympathetic. Philanthropic enterprises abound. Public sentiment has grown very sensitive to want, cruelty, suf-

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fering, injustice. On every side people are saying, "We must *do* something for humanity." The world-motto is "Lend a Hand." The universal rallying cry is, not "faith," not "sacrifice," but "service." And certainly over much of this humanitarian activity every follower of Jesus will heartily rejoice. The only form of Christianity worth having is "applied Christianity." A faith that does not bear fruit is indeed dead. And we must ever bear in mind that the church itself is very largely responsible for this tenderness and pitifulness which have become so powerful in the world.

But there are dangers even here. We may well ask: Does this philanthropic policy, as a rule, penetrate to the roots of life? Much that is being done reminds one of the husbandman who, to save the life of his tree, paints its trunk, varnishes its leaves, and ties fruit on its branches. But the ever-present judgment was well described by the Master, "Because they had no *root*, they withered away." And his prescription for increase of Inner Life still points the way of salvation: Dig about the roots and enrich them. The branches may bear the fruit, but the roots bear the branches. The soul is the ultimate source of fruitfulness. We do not have too much charity, but we do have too little Christian nurture. We do not have too much preventive medicine, but we

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do have too little preventive grace of God, for the spirit is more than the flesh. To lend a hand that is worth lending we must have a great heart to work through it. To be a fruitful servant, the Christ spirit must abound in us. Self-sacrifice is glorious and helpful in proportion to the magnitude and excellence of the individual who sacrifices.

It is the specific task of the Christian church to feed the roots of life; and by enlarging the sources of spiritual power it accomplishes the most practical work that can be done for the human race. If the church were made more effective, as it would be if all good people would support it as they ought, much of the superficial philanthropy of the day would not be needed. Put the grace of God into the heart of the drunken husband — better still, get it into the heart of the boy before drink is tasted — and then clothes for the ragged children, a day nursery for the baby that the wife may support the family by scrubbing in some other home — these and many similar things would be unnecessary.

How often we merely toy with the fringes of life, when we ought to be feeding its roots! The church must indeed *do* something; but the supreme thing for it to do is to enthrone the spirit of Jesus in the heart, and then, not only the divine doing, but the diviner living,

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will follow. The larger and nobler soul will be worth more to the world here as well as to heaven than double pay or more skilful fingers.

A church that fails to set its people at work for the community is a failure; but a church that neglects the sources of spiritual life in multiplication of the machinery of social service will not long run its machinery. Effective reforms do not begin in economic policies, but in the growing soul, which grows because it feeds on the truth and love of God. The gravest danger today is the tendency on the part of many earnest people to divorce social betterment from its spiritual source. A new social order can only issue from regenerated hearts. A renewed life is the supreme preparation for a glorified humanity. The spirit of Christ in the soul will make the life of the individual and his community more heavenly than any possible redistribution of the products of labor.

In our urgent demands for service, too many of us forget that it makes all the difference in the world who serves: whether a person filled with the grace of God or someone impelled by a mere desire for thoughtless adventure. The heavenly blessing lies, not in the gift carried in the hand, but in the heavenly love of the heart, which works through the hand. Nothing could be more unfortunate than for philan-

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thropic service to become a mere fad, a social whim, or a fashionable pastime. A divine preparation must lie back of every divine service.

Before we start out to help others, we must consider what we have to give them. Have we ourselves so thoroughly repented of our sins that we have the peace of God to impart? Have we so completely conquered the flesh that we can speak with impressive authority about the spiritual life as an actual personal possession? Is the hope of heaven such a commanding reality in us that we can lift others out of unbelief and despair? Is the spirit of Jesus so dominant in our own hearts that every famishing soul shall feel his love when we approach?

The plea for service ought not to be silenced, but surely the Christian nurture that insures effective service needs to be more emphasized. And it is just this heart-preparation, feeding the roots of life, which the church provides. It sends competent because consecrated individuals into the world prepared and able to help. It is not enough that *some* man go up and down the coasts of Labrador; if supreme good is to come of the services, it must be a Dr. Grenfell whose heart has been prepared by the grace of God.

The appeal to experience in a thousand different directions will confirm the state-

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ments here made, but the story of one village will be sufficient at this point. In a western hamlet life was crude; there was no church, a poor school, much drunkenness, and many cases of family disgrace and social disorder. When a dam was built across the river and a mill erected, many thought that the new means of employment and the money thus added to the income of the community would soon bring in the Kingdom. In a short time better clothes began to be worn and better houses began to be built. But drunkenness did not stop, nor profanity, nor Sunday lawlessness, nor street broils, nor family disorders. Then the wiser ones said: We must have a better school. A new building was erected and a more cultivated teacher was employed. There was some improvement, but no radical change.

Then one young man, whose roots of life had been fed by the spirit and gospel of Jesus, settled in the village. He made no criticisms and indulged in no comments, but he moved among the people as a genial friend. From his hands a few good books passed to the more thoughtful young people. First a reading club came, then a temperance society, later a quiet prayer meeting, and finally a gracious minister preaching now and then. Hearts here and there were touched. Parents responded to the appeals to their better nature. Children came

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together in a Sunday-school. At last a religious society was organized and a little chapel was built. Results? A new community! A bright look in mother faces; a new language on the children's lips; the saloons first deserted and then closed; the constable nothing to do and the docket of the justice of the peace with few entries; homes full of happiness! A smiling village, because the souls of the people had been fed. More money? Yes! But far better than that — more manhood! Religion had transformed human hearts; the church had brought life somewhat under the law of love.

A friend of the church, a distinguished Scottish divine, Rev. Dr. A. B. Bruce, recently made this statement: "To be enthusiastic about the church in its present condition is impossible!"[1] And while its friends are saying such critical things as this, no wonder that this institution should receive severe kicks and cuffs from the indifferent and the worldly. Many of them boastingly claim that there will be no Church of Tomorrow. They tell us that in the kingdom of man that is being organized on earth at present, the superstition respecting God, the foolishness of worship, and the selfishness of the immortal hope will be absent. The state will supplant the church, politics will take the place of prayers, science will illuminate

[1] The Kingdom of God, p. 272.

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the path of life that piety once darkened, the doctor will abolish the pain that the preacher asked people to bear, and agencies conducive to civic righteousness will engage the popular energies formerly wasted on religious services! The only trouble with the glowing prophecy is that it forgets human nature and abolishes the universe itself!

Certainly the present condition of the Christian church is far from satisfactory. But this may be said truthfully about every human institution: the school, the court, the home. Even politics has its imperfections and agriculture its worries. And yet, a good many people are enthusiastic teachers, lawyers, politicians, and farmers. The church was not quite perfect in the time of the Puritan Commonwealth, but the Roundheads did a mighty work for civilization. Religion did not seem to be flourishing in the days of Wesley, but the Methodists did more to advance the welfare of Great Britain than any of its statesmen in the eighteenth century. However bad the condition of the church today may be, that very situation ought to challenge loyalty and inspire enthusiasm. All the more need that men rally to its support and give it personal attention and adequate money that it may become what it ought to be.

The very weakness of the church means a

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grave danger to civilization that must be surmounted by religious faith; its shortcomings reveal the degeneracy of society that must be removed by a more spiritual piety. Its needs are the necessities of humanity. The condition of mankind during the coming century is bound up with the Church of Tomorrow. If strong men do not loyally support it, so that it shall be able to feed the roots of life adequately, then human progress will not continue. In fact, the more we appreciate the present imperfections of the church, the more this situation ought to stimulate our activity and inspire sacrifice in its behalf.

But really, it is a grave mistake to assert that the church is, at present, a failure and religion moribund. The little village church may have a small congregation, a wretched financial policy, a narrow sectarian spirit; its minister may be crude in manners, antiquated in theological views, and bungling in speech, but after all that church does feed the souls of men. If it were shut up for a couple of years, this fact would be clearly apparent and keenly appreciated.

This was recently realized in the case of a town in Maine. For, as soon as the grass began to grow before its threshold, rank weeds of unrighteousness began to fill the hearts of the young. As soon as the cobwebs began to

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cover its windows, many a face showed the deep lines of fresh sorrows. Many persons who had never heard its preacher did hear its jubilant bell when it had been rung, and it had reminded them of God, and Duty, and Heaven. But with the silencing of that bell came a silence to the still small voice in the breast; and, with this shrinking of the soul, came a deadening of life in home and shop and town-house. Finally, the men of the village awoke and said: "We are losing some of the most precious things on earth. Let us open the church and help the new minister when he comes." The appeal to life everywhere would show that even the poor church is not wholly a failure.

Some critics of the church contend that it fails because it does not attack the bad management of jails and asylums; because it does not put a stop to trusts and monopolies. There are many such evils in the world, whose existence is a discredit to our civilization. But the question arises: What is the relation of the church to such specific evils of the body politic? Shall it apply salve to pimples, or so invigorate the system that sores will cease? It may overload itself with sermons and committees on a score of distressing social disorders, but if its energies are largely applied in these directions, what becomes of fundamental religious work

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— Christian nurture and character-building? The real "life-needs" of the people in a congregation on Sunday morning lie in the line of spiritual discipline: touching the heart and quickening the conscience, inspiring the mind and bracing the will. Harrowing descriptions of stockyards and poorhouses are not fruitful means of spiritual culture.

If, on the other hand, the ministry of religion actually raises the moral and spiritual tone of a community, establishing noble ideals and multiplying ethical motives, then existing evils will necessarily be faced and conquered. If the preacher gets the grace of God into the hearts of a few leaders in the little mining camp, he need organize no raid on its gambling den; the new life that he has created will look after these things and abolish them.

It is the office of the church to create and communicate religion; and when men are made profoundly religious, the diseases of society will cease. Behind the venal city hall is the dishonest market, and behind both is the corrupt heart. Bring it to repentance and both politics and business will be purified. To leave its special task and spend its time in applying poultices and cauterizing sores would be for the church to begin at the wrong end. Such a policy is directly opposite to that of Jesus, who began with the soul. With abun-

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dance of Inner Life there all else will follow. It is true that the church must do something more than benefit the individual. It must turn him into a benefactor. But let us remember that he will be a benefactor to society, helping to solve its problems and uprooting its evils, only so far as he abounds in the spirit of Jesus, which must come into his heart before his hand will be very effective in social betterment.

The relation of the church to socialism is a serious problem which is at present occupying the minds of many earnest people. And what this relation should be can best be determined by remembering that the task of the church is to feed the roots of life.

As is well known, there are many kinds of socialism and many groups of socialists with different ideals and policies. But the Church of Tomorrow need concern itself with only two types of socialism. First, there are those who believe somewhat in the church, but who would turn it into a socialistic experiment station, where industrial, economic, hygienic, and reformatory agencies should receive the chief, if not the only, attention of pulpit and pew. To them the only object for the church to have in mind is to enable men and women to live a *comfortable* life. The moral ideal is not absent from their program

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of life, and they appreciate somewhat the beauty of holiness, but they have an exaggerated notion of the importance of material conditions. So that what they demand is that the church become more of a Good Samaritan than in the past. Yes, even more than this: that it so reorganize the economic groundwork of human society that the Good Samaritan will not even be needed, because few or none will be wounded on the way of life by selfish greed.

Now, it is true that the church must not forget to be a Good Samaritan. It must raise up men who will lead in every ministry of relief and reform, and it must speak bold words that shall shame the vicious and the unjust into works meet for repentance. But the chief danger today is that the church will fail to preach and practise with power a gospel on a level with the intelligence, the sentiment, and the need of the age. Its great task is to reveal man to himself as the Son of God and open within him the deep and everlasting sources of Eternal Life. To abolish the thieves so that no traveler shall fall by the way, making necessary the mercy of the Good Samaritan, something more must be done than to double wages and reform tenements, as good as these things may be. Selfish hearts make thieves, and the remedy for selfishness is the grace of

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God. To feed the roots of life with the gospel of Jesus is the surest and most effective preventive work, making the journey of life safest wherever men may go.

For the church to turn aside from its historic methods of evangelization (however much they may need improvement) and center its efforts on the redistribution of the world's goods would be to forsake its real source of power and discontinue its most efficient method for training men in goodness, which, when achieved, not only provides the Good Samaritans, but more and better, makes all the ways of life easier and safer. A heart made new in the love of Jesus is the greatest preventive of crime and the chief assurance of adequate help wherever it may be needed.

Second, there are other socialists who look upon the church as moribund — too weak to help or too corrupt to care! They feel that so-called religion is simply a luxury to the rich, a burden to the poor, a menace to the free. They claim that belief in God is a prop to despotism, hope of heaven a mild opiate to deaden heartaches, creeds and rites utterly incapable of doing for any human being what, in their eyes, he really needs. Their cry is: "Give us justice here and now, and we will forego the promised glories of a future heaven. Stop dreaming of the white robes of paradise,

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and instead double the wage of the laborer that he may decently clothe his children today!" One of the most cultivated of these socialistic critics of the church has recently written: "The Christian church has been arraigned at the bar of the conscience and reason of the masses; weighed in the balance and found wanting!"

These earnest but misguided iconoclasts, more numerous than is commonly supposed, revolting from what seems to them an irrational form of piety, would tear down the church in order that the Republic of Man may appear on the earth. And no wonder that the church is hated by some people. It has done a great many hateful things in the past, and superstitions in matters pertaining to religion do indeed greatly impede the progress of humanity at this very hour. If the churches were at present doing their whole duty, socialists would be fewer and men would be happier. As the weakness or injustice of a government is the opportunity and inspiration of the revolutionist, so the failures of the church not only alienate men from religion, but also provoke them to go outside of its walls and institute all sorts of schemes for the improvement of mankind.

And yet, in spite of all these things, we must still hold that organized religion has generally stood for far more good than evil. Its

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ideal may have been very imperfect, but it has helped to move innumerable imperfect human beings to better conduct and purer joy. The need is constant for religious leaders of spiritual genius to comfort, to inspire, and to discipline weak and wayward souls. The formal creed of the preacher may in some respects contradict the discoveries of physical science, but if his heart is loving, he will enrich the community with the *science of life*, his presence being a gracious benediction and his ministry a perpetual inspiration.

Philosophical and practical materialism, touched with social enthusiasm, contends that all that is needed to change the whole structure of human society — its domestic conditions, its moral habits, its civil institutions, and even its religious beliefs — is a reorganization of its economic groundwork. The implication is that circumstances make the kingdom of heaven; that manhood is the product of physical conditions; that if we properly distribute material comforts spiritual blessedness will become universal; that to give the laborer all that he earns will make him all that he ought to be; that if we effectively discourage large fortunes we shall make the misfortunes of the masses impossible; that to abolish poverty will create holiness and happiness; and that a just division of property would be the

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pledge of universal peace and the source of infinite progress.

This contention is the dominant note in all that socialistic literature which pours upon us in an ever-widening stream. We find in all these prophecies of the millennium an earnest enthusiasm for human betterment, but the emphasis, whether in the pleas for collectivism in general, or in those for special forms of social reorganization, falls everywhere more upon the goods of the world than upon the spiritual good of man. Even those socialists who do not neglect the moral ideal in their program of industrial emancipation are inclined to reverse the order of nature and contend that spiritual graces will issue if better physical conditions are provided. We have here, not so much a narrow, selfish materialism, as a socialized materialism. We easily trace in these socialistic oracles a protest and a reaction, wholesome and helpful in some respects, against that unlovely individualism, which represents the lower element in Emerson, gone to seed in a self-centered culture that is cold, exclusive, sterile, and repellent.

The ardent demands of socialists in general for the improvement of the conditions of human life; their impassioned condemnation of numberless wrongs and needless inequalities; their loud and urgent protests against all forms of

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tyranny, and especially against the havoc of war; their deep sympathies for those who toil — for these things every lover of humanity must cherish a hearty appreciation. But many of us cannot accept the remedies that they advocate or adopt their philosophy of human life. In a large part of the socialistic literature of the present day, no account is taken of the real power and glory of true individualism. There is no adequate appreciation of the part played in historic evolution by individual motive and individual initiative.

A perfect human society can come into existence only as we have perfect individuals of whom to make it. And to improve the individual, by the recreative operation of the grace of God in his heart, is the special task and the specific glory of the church, which so many of our earnest socialists do not see. Putting ten, or ten thousand, imperfect individuals side by side in a new socialistic experiment will not necessarily free any one of them of his imperfection. Although we relocate them in the social order or rearrange the profits of their labors, the inherent personal defects of every one will remain to work havoc as before.

Social salvation does not lie in the rearrangement of human particles, but in the regeneration of human hearts. When a cruel and ignorant neighbor opens a bank account, the

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neighborhood is not thereby improved, and he is not necessarily made a happier man. No mere multiplication of earthly goods can ever produce the heavenly good; these are radically different elements, which grow from different roots and produce different fruits. So far as we can make the individual recognize his social obligation, to that extent we have blessed him and helped his neighbor. But so far as we repress his individuality, or make him feel that all his *misfortunes* will be removed if he gets some of his neighbor's *fortune*, to that extent we harm him and do injury to mankind in general.

Many persons whose financial conditions are narrow and cramped very naturally feel that it would be just and helpful if their income could be increased. They exclaim: "If we could have a few dollars more a month, how much more good we could do in the world. We could give our children a better education, and we could minister more largely to the poor and the sick." To which we reply: "All very true in these particular cases! *Where the noble spirit already exists*, the larger salary would be a blessing." But it is just the great importance of the "noble spirit" that we emphasize. If it does not already exist, more money (as we see every day) is not likely to make people more noble or more helpful or more happy.

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What we insist upon is the vital truth (so largely overlooked by socialists) that "the desire to be good and to do good" needs to come first, and it is more important than the larger wage.

It is obvious that physical environment and financial income are important conditions of human life. In fostering the progress of the race, we must give great attention to these conditions. There is, for instance, a close relation between health and morals, between diet and intemperance, between a man's domicile and the life that he lives in it. But after all, these are the conditions, not the contents, of life. And to improve the diet, the dwellings, the sanitation of mankind, it is not necessary to destroy private property or nationalize all industries. The benefits desired would not necessarily follow by making it impossible for a man to become a millionaire. Equalizing incomes would not insure health or temperance. A true life must have an adequate material basis and worldly comforts enter very largely into the purpose and structure of civilization. But the advances already made along even these lines has not been so much the result of any form of socialism or tendency to nationalism as it has been the outcome of intellectual liberty and industrial freedom. Poverty is in thousands of cases a great curse:

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a prolific source of human misery. But to remove the poverty of things by destroying individual initiative and weakening personal responsibility would mean a poverty of life far worse than ordinary destitution.

Two things are everywhere needed in order to foster and hasten the progress of mankind: larger opportunity and nobler incentive. A chance to learn and to labor, on the one hand, and this the state must provide; and on the other, a yearning for holiness, an ambition for excellence, a desire for perfection which carries with it a joy in work and the habit of thrift, and these nobler incentives the church must help to create.

One of the best illustrations and demonstrations of the great benefits flowing from enlarged opportunity is afforded by the wide distribution of land among the peasants of France at the time of the Revolution. The government made it possible for thousands of the common people to become small landowners. This is recognized as one of the most important measures ever carried forward by any modern nation. It was, however, not a socialistic measure, but the exact opposite. It emphasized individualism and private ownership. This is type and symbol of many things that the government may do to help men: not by *nationalizing* industries and turning everybody into cog-

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wheels, but by making it easier to acquire and hold land, easier to build up a small business, easier to invest small savings safely. For instance, the state can take the burden of taxes off the poor and compel the rich to do their full share in support of public institutions; but this is not socialism. Wise laws and public sentiment can do much to encourage the small shopkeeper without turning the whole city into a gigantic department store with innumerable evils.

But probably the greatest factor in the march forward is not after all the open door of opportunity, but the impelling motive — a fact which finds impressive historic illustration all the way from apostolic missionaries to the masterful Puritans. Without the push forward the open door is not entered; while, if the push forward is made, it will break open a door of opportunity somewhere — a statement that finds confirmation in the careers of the thousands of young men who, though born in obscurity, have secured a college education, and of others who, though born in abject poverty, have acquired large wealth. Even among the slums the first step upward and forward is, as a rule, the result of a nobler motive rather than a new position. For the new position, if secured, is not long held, unless a new spirit had previously come into the heart.

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The Wesleyan movement in England was a demonstration on a large scale that the best thing that can be done for the poor is increase of soul rather than increase of wage. The leaders of the Salvation Army, who are not indifferent to the material conditions of human life, tell us the same story: a new heart is more important than a larger salary. While contending that this is the true philosophy of human life, we must not lessen our efforts to provide better physical conditions and juster compensations for what are called "the masses." The church, in pleading for Inner Life as the principal thing, must not neglect to speak its powerful word of protest against oppression and injustice, and it must do all that it can to ameliorate the circumstances and enlarge the opportunities of those who toil.

The chief error in much that passes under the name of socialism is found in the fact that it fails to look into the deep sources of human life. It is too much a gospel for the surface and for the moment. What a man as the child of the day most wants, and what the same man as the heir of eternity most needs, are vastly different problems, and socialism in urging him to bend every effort simply to possess the greater comfort diverts him from the larger and better life, which is enduring blessedness. It is not alone by making bread

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cheap, as beneficial as that may be, that anyone will really be made happy or noble. When we make sure that a man receives all that he earns, we have not thereby made sure that he is all that he ought to be. A change in our land system might be fruitful of good; but the deepest sources of the ills and evils of life lie in the human will, and no mere redistribution of property will ever give a single soul the power to resist temptation or to perform heroic deeds.

Even if a man makes two blades of grass grow where before only one grew, the exhortation of Carlyle, the extra grass-blade will not solve the deep problems of his life. It may make his cattle fatter, but will it make his life larger and nobler? No, indeed, for out of the heart, not out of fatted cattle, are the issues of life. Another blade of grass? Yes, by all means, for that is good, if used as means to nobler life. But just the grass-blade, or the millions of them upon a thousand acres, will not uproot the vice that kills or take away the heartache caused by a wayward daughter.

The same truth faces us when we go to the other extreme where poverty pinches. And the pinch of poverty is a real calamity in thousands of lives. Church and state may well unite, not only to stamp out pauperism, but to prevent the conditions that breed

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paupers. But what we see in nine cases out of ten as the real cause of distress is not so much low wages or an unjust land system as deficiency of life: weak will, disordered body, low vitality, feeble conscience, industrial incapacity largely due to lack of moral fiber. What every wise charity worker deplores is not so much low wages as low life. The problem is human, not simply economic. There is no more necessity that we equalize *things* than that we equalize *knowledge*. There is, however, supreme need that we equalize opportunity for knowledge and for property, but on condition that both become the servants of life. We may well put a high value on these material conditions, which socialism so over-emphasizes, and we may well demand a juster distribution of the goods of the world. But let us not be deceived. It is not by such means that a Paul is created, a Sistine Madonna painted, a Hamlet written, or a Washington produced.

Before we can successfully feed the roots of life through the church or in any other way, we must rid ourselves of the pernicious superstition that a man's troubles are chiefly due to someone else. To help the poor we must also rid them of this superstition. Too many of them erroneously believe that they suffer simply because someone has robbed them! But they need to look nearer home, at the beer mug and the

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whisky bottle. It is a fallacy to teach that a majority of these people drink because they are poor. This may be true toward the end of such wretched lives in many cases, but at the beginning it was not poverty that led to intemperance. It was instead the drink habit that precipitated them early in life from self-support to indigence, and not until they became social wrecks did want drive them to drunkenness. Some of our teachers of social science have done great harm at this point. They have failed to trace the real relation of cause and effect, and, passing by what was the original and primary condition, they have explained the problem incorrectly by looking only at its final phases.

Therefore little can be done to help certain classes of unfortunates until they are compelled to locate the responsibility of their poverty in themselves. As long as they continue to damn someone else for their misfortune they will be unfortunate. As long as extreme socialists foster this fallacy among the masses, so long will the social problem not only remain unsolved but grow worse. Monopolists undoubtedly do a lot of mischief, but in nine cases of privation out of ten, the harm so done to any particular individual is very slight in proportion to what he has done to himself. We need to look deeper into life and penetrate to the will to

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find the real cause of a vast amount of human suffering now falsely attributed to economic conditions. And to help humanity most successfully we must change the heart and reinforce the will. To feed the roots of life is the task of the church.

It is not the duty of the church to coddle the poor or condemn the rich; neither to flatter laborers nor to fight capitalists, but rather to save men, and all alike need the grace of God. There is already too much class hatred in the world, and religion must represent powerfully and persuasively the ministry of reconciliation, not only between the soul and God, but between man and man. The church must be the friend of all men and the enemy of none. Its plea for justice must be universal rather than aimed at special classes. A great deal now hotly asserted in behalf of "social justice" is marked by an intemperance of speech which, if allowed to run its insane course, would let loose the furies, who would smite the poor harder than the rich. The church must be no respecter of persons, but as impartial in its sympathies and judgments as the sunshine itself in its beneficent influence.

The dynamic characters of history whose praises are sweet to our lips are not explicable by reference to the material factors of human life. Civilization is no mere mechanism. That

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which makes man civilized lies in the realm of spirit. The Way to Utopia is impeded, not so much by poverty in material things, as by littleness and perversity of soul. The interplay of food and offspring do not explain the events which illuminate and dominate human history, such as the voyage of the Mayflower and the Haystack Prayer-meeting at Williamstown.

The initiative and assurance of man's advance come from *within*, not from *without;* a creative purpose, not increasing property. Science in general does indeed emphasize the importance of environment, but human science shows us that in the progress and peace of society the spiritual element in environment is the vital and dominating factor. The will has more to do with the march forward than the wage. The constructive agent is the man behind the tool. An additional brain cell is more important than a new luxury; a heroic heart-beat more powerful than a fresh convenience. In the human realm certain great spiritual elements constitute the fitness to survive. And it is the supreme task of the church to train men, not simply to survive as animals, but to glorify God as the children of immortality. And this it can only do by feeding the roots of life which run inward to the heart of the Infinite Father.

It is a surprising and discouraging fact that

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so many of our workers and writers in behalf of social betterment do not realize the importance of the church. One may listen to eloquent apostles of almost every reform movement now before the American people and never hear even a casual reference to the place of Christian nurture as one of the main agencies for the prevention and cure of human ills.

There has recently been published a notable book by a man of earnest spirit and wide culture, who has been dealing at first hand for more than a dozen years with the problem of crime and pauperism in the metropolis of our land. The author discusses at length the subject of human misery and its causes. He reaches the astonishing conclusion that a very large part of the misery in the world does not arise from moral causes, but from industrial maladjustment; from our unwise social methods and unjust economic arrangements. Malnutrition, crowded tenements, child labor, inadequate wages — these are fundamentally the causes of human suffering. Near the close of the volume, in summarizing the essential conditions of an ideal community, he gives a catalogue of the nine essential features which it must possess, but the work of the church is not in the list; at the end of the chapter religion is dismissed with a vague reference in a paragraph a page long!

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This explanation of the causes of human evils and sufferings is certainly pitifully inadequate. Such a philosophy of human life is manifestly wofully superficial, for it takes no account of the play of the will, the voice of conscience, or the ministry of religion. It leaves the heart entirely out of consideration, and a life without a heart means death. Such a description of an "ideal community," with no church to direct and discipline desire, to evolve and educate motive, to feed the roots of life, takes no account of the vital factors that are most precious and most powerful. Religion is the guide and guardian of all the ideal elements of civilization; and an ideal community cannot exist if the very spring and source of the ideal, the ministry of piety, is to be ignored!

It is not necessary to deny the importance of social environment in pleading the cause of religion. But religion has always been one of the supreme factors in creating and controlling social conditions. It is not necessary in emphasizing the importance of the church to ignore the need of purer milk, cleaner streets, larger homes, and better wages. But these alone are not the sources of human happiness: a pure heart, a disciplined will, a strict conscience, an abundant love for God and man — these are the determining factors of the content of life.

The impressive lesson of early Christianity

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rebukes and destroys the contention of this treatise to which reference has been made: it did reorganize human society, abolishing much of the old misery and producing on the whole a vast increase of human happiness. But it accomplished this great achievement, not by removing economic maladjustments, but by feeding the roots of life with the spirit of Jesus.

One who has watched with great care the fortunes of hundreds of college graduates for a generation can testify that the sad wreckage of human life has come largely from the lack of those spiritual qualities which the gospel supplies, and not from industrial or economic causes: it has not been a question of maladjustment, but of spiritual defect or disobedience to moral law.

If anyone will carefully survey the community in which he lives, the same truth is made impressive. Why this family in distress? Not small wages, but weak and wayward wills. Why this young man out of work? Not lack of a chance to labor, but lack of integrity. Why this sorrowing mother? Not because her boy has patched clothes, but because he has a sensual heart. Why sits misery enthroned on the father's face? Not because his shop is small, but because his son is a drunkard. Surely much needs to be done to prevent ruinous overcrowding, tyrannical competition,

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and inadequate wages. But if any person will carefully consider his own surroundings, he will see that the miseries of life are not so much due to mere environment, which may be changed by law, as they are results of a depraved disposition which can only be removed by the grace of God.

In view of these facts it is evident that, at present, one of the chief duties of the church is to assert, in the most emphatic and impressive way, its own importance. It must make the average man see and feel that he has spiritual roots that need feeding, and that religion alone can give the increase of life that he most needs. Men must be told, with no uncertain sound, that by ignoring the church they are missing the greatest opportunity of permanent happiness, of human helpfulness, of personal benefit. The church has too long compromised with the world and softly whispered its indecisive petition, when it ought to have commanded with authority.

The church takes, too often, the attitude of a timid suppliant, willing to accept whatever crumbs may carelessly be thrown to it or whatever fag-ends of time the busy man may give it, when it ought to demand the first place in the program of life. The representatives of religion do not sufficiently demand hard things — things that are difficult but worth doing. There

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is no appeal to the heroic! A call to sacrifice reaches farther than an invitation to soft seats. We need more pulpit thunder to startle people out of their complacence and make them realize that they will surely perish unless they feed the spiritual roots of their soul, out of which alone come the most beautiful flower and the most excellent fruit.

In the springtime we watch with the ecstacy of infinite delight the magic transformations of hill and valley. First the marvelously soft and varied tints that overspread tree and bush, then the leaves flung as banners to the wind and the blossoms unfolding with such wealth of architectural beauty from root and bulb, and decorating with such rich profusion of color every waving branch! How the glory of it all feasts the eye! How the mystery of it all thrills the heart!

How came it forth? The warmer sunshine? The fostering shower? The genial breath of heaven? Yes! But these alone were not enough. Out of deep roots holding the secrets of millenniums; out of deep roots embedded in rich soils full of life-energies; out of deep roots fed by the spirit of Him who clothes the grass of the field and cares for the birds of heaven — out of these roots, primarily, comes the glorious beauty of the spring landscape.

If we take a century glance westward from

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the Hudson River over another landscape, we may watch as the years pass a transformation still more wonderful. Forests melt into farms. Prairies are checked with roads and decorated with homes. River banks blossom with village and city. Streams and lakes are flecked with steamboats and sailing craft. Far and wide rise the spires of churches, the towers of court-houses, the walls of school and college — the new fortresses of a higher civilization. And best of all, unseen to the eye of flesh, fast woven over the land, like a vital and vitalizing network, the methods of piety and commerce, of politics and charity, of social interchange and beautifying art. It is a recreation of the country indescribably great and glorious.

And how came this forth? Go where you may in those wide plains and smiling valleys and ask the question: Who organized this church? Who founded this college? Who started this library? Who created this charity? Who made righteousness prevail in this community? Who established these homes? Who erected these institutions of liberty and framed these just laws? Everywhere the common answer is the same: Men and women directly or indirectly from New England. Where from? Trained in the church in that backwoods town in Maine. Where from? Trained in the church among the granite rocks of New Hampshire.

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Where from? Trained in the church in the hilltown of Massachusetts or Vermont. Where from? Trained in the churches along the streams and bays of Connecticut or Rhode Island. The civilization of that great western landscape roots in New England. It is there because religion, through the church, had during many previous years faithfully fed the roots of life that reach from the soul of man to the Oversoul.

But what of the future? If the superb achievements which now overspread that wide landscape are directly traceable to men and women nurtured by Christian piety in New England churches, can that American civilization be maintained without the disciplines of piety and the inspirations of faith which brought it forth? If the Church of the Past was so important, will not the Church of the Future be equally important? Of one thing this historical illustration makes us absolutely sure: If the sons and daughters continue the civilization founded by their fathers and mothers, they must devote themselves with equal ardor and enthusiasm to the church, helping it to feed those deep spiritual roots out of which all permanent human progress springs.

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III. ITS THOUGHT OF GOD: THE TAP-ROOT OF RELIGION

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TOPICS

IMPORTANCE OF FAITH IN GOD — IMPOSSIBLE TO IGNORE GOD — A DOCTRINE LARGE ENOUGH TO FIT THE FACTS — APPARENT PREVALENCE OF ATHEISM — HOW THE CHURCH MUST MEET NEGATIVE MOODS — NO ABSOLUTE ATHEISTS — ALL HAVE ATHEISTIC LIMITATIONS — THE REAL ATHEISM TO BE FEARED — NATURE INTOLERANT OF NEGATION — DEPOSIT OF ATHEISM IN GREAT RELIGIONS: AS SEEN IN PERSIAN DUALISM — IN THE PANTHEISM OF THE BRAHMAN — FOUND IN BUDDHA'S HUMANITARIANISM — NOT ABSENT FROM CHRISTIAN CREEDS — WARNINGS FOR CHURCH IN SUCH LIMITATIONS — THE DESPAIR OF HERBERT SPENCER — THE ERRORS OF "PRAGMATISM" — THE SUFFICIENT AND EFFICIENT THOUGHT OF GOD — MAKING THE WORD "GOD" A POWER FOR GOOD.

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III. ITS THOUGHT OF GOD: THE TAP-ROOT OF RELIGION

THE church, as custodian of the Thought of God, is guardian of the supreme sanctity of life; as teacher of the moral laws of God it is the powerful inspirer and fashioner of human conduct; as the representative of those hopes and fears that spring from faith in God it is the architect of man's immortal destiny; as revelator of God's presence it is a light bringer to those who sit in darkness, giving to the friendless the assurance of infinite love and to sufferers the peace that passeth understanding.

In feeding the roots of life the Church of Tomorrow must refresh, emphasize, and ennoble man's consciousness of God. It must impress upon mind and heart a commanding conviction respecting God, large enough to fit the supreme facts of the universe. In its thought of God must be harmoniously blended the enduring elements of all ancient sanctities with the discoveries and inspirations of the newest scientific revelations. In it must operate with impressive power the fresh ideals of democracy and education and the modern yearnings for social service and human helpfulness. Religion

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must stand for a God-consciousness which includes all of beauty, all of truth, all of love, all of hope: all of inexorable law on the one hand and on the other hand all of human tenderness. Human life shrivels from lack of an adequate doctrine of God.

We are in danger of losing fellowship with God from an over-emphasis of the greatness of the "modern man." In the inordinate egotism of the passing hour we boast too often of the individual as a demi-god. But when God is forgotten, man himself will not long seem divine. The human being is never far from the brute line, except when upborne by his consciousness of God. It is a keen, deep sense of our heredity from the infinite Father which evermore dignifies human life and refreshes the sense of fellowship among men. The one specific remedy for social frivolity, domestic infelicity, and civic corruption is an overwhelming conviction of God's majesty and power. What we most need today is not so much more rigorous human laws, but a quickened consciousness that there is an Eternal Lawgiver before whose judgment seat we must stand, not only in the distant Tomorrow of Death, but also in the living Present. Belief in God is a vast economic and social asset.

The bread of life for the spirit of man is fellowship with the spirit of God. Man dis-

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covers himself in trying to find God. His own human fatherhood is impressively transfigured by the realization of his divine sonship. To be conscious of a heavenly citizenship is to be equipped for highest civic service. To feel the moral pressure of the universe as operative through faith in God is best preparation for the duties of the neighborhood. Supreme reverence for the Infinite and Eternal makes respect for human rights constant and effective. Faith in the love of God helps to fill the heart with love for all the children of men. When we most strongly feel that we are sons of God, then are we the most enthusiastic in all social services that mean a divine life for mankind. Nothing is so productive of heroism in behalf of human progress or creative of sympathy for those in distress as the feeling that God is love and that we are co-workers with him. A soul that is permanently without God in the world is not likely to sacrifice very much in order to bring in the kingdom of God on earth. To feed the spiritual roots of the soul with an inspiring and lifting thought of God is to spread joy and peace among men.

The thought of God is given in human experience, and a noble belief in God is needed in order to make that experience supreme in beauty, joy, and nobility. It is not an exotic which only grows under the shelter of priestly

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care. It is a necessary and inevitable constituent of man's life. It is the function of the church so to educate men in the thought of God that they may become perfect sons of the infinite Love and Truth.

To complete our thinking about ourselves and the universe, we are forced to affirm the existence of God. We may, like the eminent ethical culture lecturer, declare that the word "God" is not even the symbol of a reality and ought no longer to be used, and yet, before we conclude our discussion, we are compelled to bring some divinity in by the back door and we set up an image and name it "persistence of force" with Spencer or *Mind-Stuff* with Haeckel! This was just what the ethical culture lecturer did when, in closing his address, he indulged in this apostrophe to Man, saying: "Man, the hand by which the eternal purpose fulfils itself!" But what right to talk of "purpose fulfilling itself" if there is no God? Moreover, when we ask, "Whose hand? Hand of what or whom?" then he is dumb! Thus it is that the thought of God, when driven out the front door, inevitably comes in unawares somewhere, for he cannot be excluded from the language of life.

We can no more ignore God than we can ignore the sun. He finds us, as the light finds us. It is the function of the church to help

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men live in God, as it is the duty of parents to keep their children as much as possible in the sunshine. We may shut our eyes, but the sun continues to shine and to give light to the earth and health to the children of men. We may deny some other man's dogma about God with our lips, and the denial may even be the tearing of a bandage from the eye that we may be able to see more of the glory of the Lord, but we still live in him and by him and from him, for even our careless speech confesses his presence and reveals his power.

The priest, or prophet, is the representative or interpreter of this phase of human life. He is simply the oracle of a common conviction, which commissions and commands him. He derives his real authority, not indeed from the imposition of hands at his ordination, or from ancient Scripture texts, or from what has been privately revealed to him, but rather from what men have felt in their own deepest experiences. He is God-equipped because they are God-conscious. And it is the peculiar function of the church, a precious work which it does not share with any other institution, to cultivate this God-consciousness, with which so much that is best in human life is inextricably intertwined. Moreover, the Church of Tomorrow has more to do in this line than the Church of Yesterday undertook, just because

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human life has become more complex: there are more burdens to bear and more temptations to face, more truth to utilize and more love to apply.

One of the most important duties of religion today is, therefore, to proclaim an interpretation of the universe large enough to include God, and also to affirm with persuasive power a thought of God both large enough to fit the discoveries of science and noble enough to express the aspirations of humanity. Only in this way can the Church of Tomorrow win the reason and stir the conscience of mankind. This age in its deepest thought and noblest impulses has little concern with the mathematical distinctions or interior mystical mechanism of the Godhead. Indeed, many a modern heart has become too reverent to attempt to analyse the Infinite! Life has flowed into other and deeper channels. In fact, the pressing problem at present is not to induce men to subscribe to traditional formulas descriptive of God, but to make them feel the presence of God and realize that the worship of God is a matter of supreme practical importance.

The preacher need not take any elaborate argument in proof of the existence of God into the pulpit. All he needs to carry there is the supreme conviction, backed by his own godly life, that God the Father is the supreme reality.

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The affirmation of God through spiritual character wins scoffers to prayer and turns skeptics into worshipers. The testimony of the infidel to the power of the saintly minister is significant: "I could easily demolish his logic, but I could not resist his life!" To hallow his name is better than to dogmatise about his decrees. To live his truth is more helpful than to discuss his mysteries. To display his love is more powerful than to attempt to describe the mysteries of his being. What we need to do is to enrich the meanings of God's Fatherhood by a life that is pure, true, loving. Then men will easily find God through us.

Two things are, therefore, now imperative: an adequate thought of God, and then such a presentation of this thought that it shall have a supreme fruitfulness in life. The church must give men a thought of God that will not vanish when they enter the scientific laboratory. It must indoctrinate them with a thought of God that, instead of offending, shall embrace and embody the humanitarian impulse and the educational ideal. It must enthrone a thought of God in the heart which shall serve as a real Sinai, giving effective commandments to all departments of industry and to all fields of commerce.

The preacher must take the facts of nature, poured in rich tides of illumination at our feet

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by historical and scientific investigations, and make people see that these are new materials out of which must be built more glorious temples and higher altars for the worship of the living God. It is the task of the church to help us to discover within the disclosures of physical science the inner shrine of spiritual truth where we may be more at home with God.

Apparently, there is a good deal of practical atheism in the world at present. The question arises: How shall the Church of Tomorrow deal with it? The problem is important and intricate. It must be studied from many sides and treated with great wisdom and tact. On no other subject in religion at the present time is there greater need for clear thinking and careful treatment than at this point.

It may be very truly said that there are no atheists — and yet, we are all at times atheistic. Both of these apparently contradictory statements are true. In that remote past when the creative impulse passed on from the animal to the human, and man walked forth with interpreting mind and sensitive heart, he felt the beauty and glory of the spring days; his consciousness of kinship with the wondrous Life everywhere abounding made him a worshiper. Whoever, likewise, feels the mystery of the renewed earth, however inadequate his thought of God, is no atheist. Every heart

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that responds to the vernal or the autumnal promptings and pours forth a joyous song praises God and affirms the divineness of the universe.

It is the high privilege of the church to encourage the experiences that quicken in us this consciousness of God. The church as an institution exists to perform this special service for men, a most precious service, for we are at our best in shop and school, in home and market, only as our sense of the divineness of life and the presence of God is keenest and most commanding.

But there are seasons when the man who has at times felt the presence of God lapses into an atheistic mood. The eye looks far and wide, but discovers no tokens of a loving Friend and sees no indications of a merciful Providence. The ear listens, but hears no oracle of friendly council or fatherly compassion.

It is just here that the church must come to man's rescue and redeem his life from its atheistic mood — a mood of depletion and despair. No other agency is specially set apart for this peculiar and important task. By its service of prayer, praise, and prophecy it must lead man back to his higher estate of spiritual ecstacy and moral fervor, and then send him forth into the world to conquer its worldliness and redeem the evil time.

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There are days when we look into the heavens, embossed with flaming worlds, and we so feel the majesty and sublimity of that dome that it seems the embodied smile of God. As our heart quickens in the ecstacy of delight over the thought that he leadeth forth not only the stars, but also the sons of men, then we bow down in solemn awe and worship him who filleth all in all. A melody within the breast greets the music of the spheres, and all is peace because we feel ourselves clasped in the embrace of an almighty Power that is infinite Love.

There is one agency in human society, and only one, called of God, to keep men at this flood tide of spiritual enthusiasm — the church of Christ. It not only leads us to the loftiest heights of life, but it detains us there, while it prolongs the glow in the heavens and the warmth in the heart, so that we may walk courageously and act at our best when we go down into the valley.

But not always are we so fortunate. Sometimes the stars seem blazing eyes that burn with hate. Our anxious gaze nowhere traces a sign of sympathy and nowhere discovers an intimation of kinship with a loving Father in heaven. That distant arch seems, not serene but stolid, mocking the craving within the breast for companionship. Our importance as individuals withers, and we feel crushed by

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the very vastness of the universe. We yearn to touch a friendly hand, but we seem everywhere only to jostle against the iron handle of a soulless machine. We fall on what we once thought were altar-stairs sloping upward to God, but now they seem no more than unfeeling, stony facts, linked by pitiless laws in a fateful chain of invariable sequence, with no Law-Giver resident within who cares for us. The trust that we once had in a parental Life, who makes that very uniformity of nature the shelter of his love for us, fades away, and we feel ourselves in dismal, unprotected isolation. So that, losing the consciousness of an infinite Friend, cooperative in our lives, all nature lies before us emptied of divinity, and we grope in darkness, atheists indeed!

The work of the church, its special duty and blessed privilege, is to resist the tendencies which drag men down into these unfruitful atheistic moods. They are ever active in human life, and they must be fought as disease is fought: the preacher *is*, indeed, the physician of the soul; and as a wise physician he must depend chiefly upon preventive rather than merely curative agencies. The church must strive constantly to reinforce the will, that it may not falter in hours of temptation. It must strive to disclose to hard-pressed and weary souls the blessings hidden in the cares of life,

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that the love of God may be clearly realized when not apparent. It must strive to interpret misfortunes so that the clouds may soon pass and the smile of God may be seen. It must strive to direct attention to the neglected facts which reveal the presence of God that would otherwise have been unseen. The church is needed to keep the channels open between Father and son in order that the infinite Life may abound in the child; for the distractions of daily toil often impede the spiritual tide, which prayer invites and prophecy applies.

And yet, after taking account of all these negative moods, was there ever a soul that did not stand, at some dayspring, by its own "east window of divine surprise"? Was there ever a human mind that did not feel after the ultimate Cause of things, so that, penetrating below the mere appearances, it did lay hold of infinite Being and, however dimly it may have seen the truth, did worship the real God? Was there ever a man who passed through life without at times feasting upon the beauty of field and sky and recognizing all these manifestations as the workmanship of nature's great Artist? Was there ever a heart that felt the sting of death, the broken bonds of affection, or the bitterness of failure, without an effort to find within the darkness some star of hope and to discover within the sorrow some

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evidence of a providence too great to comprehend but too good to distrust? Whoever yields to these promptings and indulges in these trusts builds for himself an altar and worships the true God. And to see to it that this altar is built and this worship is maintained is the task of the church.

And still, how often our grief or our prosperity eclipses our consciousness of God! We are smothered in riches that are the greatest poverty and in our abundance of gifts we forget the Giver. We stand within the temple and make no offering and breathe no prayer, because the heart is dead. While again, our tears, instead of clearing the vision, blind us to the Lord of Life, and though he passes so close to us, our selfishness shuts him from us and we abide in loneliness without God in a world God-filled. It must ever be the aim of the church to supplant this loneliness by a sense of the *Friendship* of God!

May we not, then, most confidently affirm that no heart has been absolutely destitute of reverence, while all hearts have probably lapsed during certain negative seasons from the attitude of worship? And in just this confidence the church must work. Not even with the saints, however, is the thought of God a constant factor, having the same pressure at all times. It is the rhythmic response

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of our human souls to tidal waves that sweep through the universe. It is the function of religion to make the soul feel these waves and incorporate into life the power they bring. Atheism is not a fixed habit of any mind, but it is rather the frantic gesture of a man who has lost his footing — perhaps while mountain-climbing for a larger view of the truth, and perhaps, alas, while seeking animal pleasures. We are not always as sure of God as when we are at our best, but no soul is permanently and persistently atheistic. The universe is intolerant of absolute negation. Life is possible only upon the assumption of nature's supreme divinity. To press this fact upon the attention of men is the duty of the pulpit.

Whoever plants, so far trusts in God; he implies an order in nature and rests his life upon the law of cause and effect. Whatever his lips may carelessly say, his conduct testifies that he has found some divineness in things. Whoever springs the arch of bridge or dome performs an act of faith; he builds in the confidence that the laws of mechanics are eternal and that granite will not crumble at the command of some malevolent spirit. Whoever broadcasts in human hearts some great truth, proclaiming it against the mob and pouring out his blood to witness for it and drive it home, reveals a reverence that is the heart of piety.

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This is a demonstration that man believes in God as Truth, a revelation that God has made true men to serve him in sincerity. This man may wear the name of infidel and even boast of it, but no lover of truth can be an absolute atheist. His very love of truth is worship: affirmation that this universe is moral at the core. All such men must be made to see that their place is in the church for needed spiritual education, that their real faith may be warmed to articulate expression.

The only atheism that we need fear is that levity which tramps profanely over all the sacred places of our common human life and sees nothing in the universe to reverence and finds nothing in the brother by our side to respect and honor.

The only atheism that we need condemn is that insincerity which, ignoring the fact that this universe is the embodiment of truth, leads us to play a mere part as despicable as it is deceptive.

The only atheism that we need resist is that selfishness which, neglectful of the divine law of love, erects its own pleasure into a rule of action, to find too late that abiding and unalloyed happiness is the unsought reward that comes to those who have blessed the lives of others. We enter into blessedness so far, and only so far, as we make ourselves a blessing to

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others. And through this fact we enter into our deepest confidence that God is love.

On the other hand, how true it is that underneath our formal praise of God very much practical atheism sometimes flows. We speak the prayer that implies eternal Goodness, and straightway our hearts meditate revenge and our hands participate in evil. We loudly sing the praises of the God of Truth, and then put on a mask to deceive the world, condemned alike by the God we pretended to worship and by the men whom we did not deceive. We sometimes lose faith in God, and try to help out our trade by artifice; and then we learn with heartaches, oft and bitter, that "nothing pays but God." We imagine God forgetful of our great cause, and we try to help it along by pious frauds, special pleadings, and unholy persecutions. And then what atheists we do become! No atheism is quite so damnable as that of men who readily lie for God, or place a fellowman like Bruno or Galileo on the rack to force him by horrible pains to say that God is what within this man's very soul God has revealed himself not to be!

How atheistic the policy which affirms that the end justified the means! The end is fruitage of the means, and the evil never bears the good. To try to help the cause of truth by sophistry and duplicity is implication exe-

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crable that this universe at bottom is a lie. If we reap truth in the end, we must witness for it through all the fields of life in which we labor. When we forsake the banner of veracity and wander off after ease and honor, we part company with God; and though we travel far, ease and honor we shall not find. The praise of other foolish men we may have for one brief day, but their own children will despise us. So that one supreme obligation of the church is this: that it worship and serve the God of Truth with absolute sincerity!

Nature brings to naught the tricks of those who wear masks. To ignore the sublime sincerity in which our own life is framed is to sign our death-warrant. No verbal denial of the God described in creed or ritual is so virulent as that which works its way like a deadly poison from a false heart. We exile ourselves from the peace of God and help to make the world a moral chaos when we lapse from conviction into mere conventionality and pretend to be what we are not. Against all such unveracity, too often found today in both pulpit and pew, the true prophet of the God of Truth must set himself with uncompromising condemnation. With many people today belief in God is a diminishing influence, because those who officially pretend to speak for him are not frank; they speak with an uncertain sound.

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Who then are the real atheists? The priests and Levites who pass by on the other side indifferent to a fellow sufferer. Who are the real atheists? The men who traffic in woman's virtue, making merchandise of the most precious gift of God to man, and care not for the saddest wreckage of human life, so long as they gain filthy lucre that is filthy indeed. Who are the real atheists? Those who desecrate the landscape with bill-board profanity and teach innocent children and unwary laborers lessons of falsehood that encourage habits of indulgence in drink which lead thousands to asylums, prisons, and pauper graves every year. Who are the real atheists? Those who misrepresent the people in city hall or legislative chamber, intent on plunder rather than obedient to principles, and who, for a little transient political glory or financial gain, sell their influence in open market to the highest bidder. Who are the real atheists? Those who take undue advantage of business situations, crushing competition with more than savage cruelty and destroying rivals with fiendish ingenuity, making every hungry widow who buys a loaf or every shivering mother who seeks fuel pay a heavy tribute to diabolical greed.

These are the real atheists with whom the church must deal with more than Puritanic strictness or inquisitorial severity. The heretics

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whom religion has to face are not unbelievers in Genesis, but men who ruthlessly trample the Golden Rule under their feet, saying that it is only an "iridescent dream"! The unbelievers whom the pulpit must overawe with the terrors of the law are not the Higher Critics, but the money-mad, pleasure-seeking, luxury-loving people who have no respect for the sons of God and no realization of their own divine inheritance. No scoffer at holy things equals in danger to religion the saloon which opens innumerable ways of ruin before the feet of old and young; no theological skepticism is comparable in satanic virulence to the practical indifference respecting the Ten Commandments, all too frequent in home and market; no verbal blasphemy, bad as it always is, goes with such poison to the center of life as the profanation of womanhood on the cheap stage or the cruelty to childhood in mill and mine. Here the care and solicitude of religion must center.

It is for the Christian church to contribute those experiences and trainings of life which shall discourage all this practical atheism and produce men and women who will, by their character, be irresistible witnesses for God and fruitful helpers of humanity. It must represent a thought of God that so commands reason, warms feeling, and reinforces volition that

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conduct will actually follow and fulfil the moral law. Belief in God must be more than a personal satisfaction: it must be an imperative rule of action. If the church cannot so train men that it is evident on the market that faith in God has a supreme civic value, then its doors might as well be shut!

The tap-root of religion is, then, the thought of God, which it is the supreme function of the church to cultivate and exalt. And yet there has been unfortunately a deposit of atheism at the heart of all the great religions. No historic faith has believed enough in God. Supreme reverence for God in spots and seasons is abundant, but in every direction there is some failure to penetrate all places and embrace all times with this sublime and commanding conviction. Innumerable have been the prophets who have proclaimed a mighty belief in God, but almost every one has put limits to Providence and has left vast realms destitute of the divine presence. It is easy to have a little sanctuary and find God there, but how hard, even for the psalmist, to find God by the altars of Egypt or within the temples at Babylon! It is easy to believe in God in the presence of a saint, but how atheistic we become when we stand before a sinner or a pagan! How difficult to believe enough in God — that he is the friend of our enemies and

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that he has also spoken to the heathen! It is the more adequate and all-sufficient thought of God which the Church of Tomorrow must proclaim.

We owe to the ancient Persians a doctrine of God that was inherently noble and that has been very influential for good. Zoroaster (1000 B.C.) was certainly a great spiritual genius. His interpretation of life was, in many respects, most sublime. He laid his emphasis with tremendous power upon the moral excellences that must be central in every true life: purity of heart and truthfulness in speech. The great god, Mazda, whom he proclaimed, was represented as the source of light, the lord of life, the fountain of health, the author of truth, the creator of purity, love, and goodness. The Persian belief in God was remarkable and praiseworthy because essentially spiritual and powerfully ethical. It clothed itself in the symbolism of light; it went inward to the soul for the source of its power and the field of its ministries; and it made itself felt in conduct and character as a power for righteousness in a manner quite exceptional even among the great religions of antiquity.

Yet, in the midst of this intense faith in God there was a large element of atheism. Reverence was incomplete because the empire

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of God was limited. To the Persians the universe was full of things that did not belong to God. Worship, with them, did not sweep the whole circle of nature, but it skipped many places as undivine. Over against the good Mazda, operated the Evil One, a devil almost as powerful and apparently more active. The Persian could not find God in darkness, discord, disease, poison, or pain; so that his denials of God were almost as numerous as his affirmations. What was it but atheism to say that the thistle was satanic? What but atheism to set aside honey as evil because made by an insect with a sting? What but atheism to make every shadow the home of a demon? The belief in a devil is everywhere atheistic, a limitation set upon God, a denial that "goodness" is supreme, a confession that we have been unable to find all of nature divine. The theory of an opposition kingdom represents the insufficiency of faith whether that opposition kingdom be called satanic or named "malicious animal magnetism"!

At this point modern science enters with its vast and precious contribution to religion. By freeing and cleansing the universe of the devil, it enables us to find God where our fathers missed him. Scientific discovery, by tracing the reign of law, by laying bare the unity in things and souls, by demonstrating the con-

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servation and correlation of energy, and by making the Infinite the occupant of every atom and mind, forever destroys this old form of atheism. How childish to believe that frost is satanic and dew divine! Our God in yeast and a devil in mildew! It is now becoming possible to have a thought of God commensurate with the universe.

The problem of sin remains to perplex our minds and burden our hearts. But slowly the light of truth is penetrating the mystery of evil, and today the subject wears an aspect radically different from that which it wore some ages since. It does not help matters to personify sin and trace it back to Satan. Science, however, does help us, in that it enables us to see that what is evil in us is not rooted in a malignant personage who is abroad in the universe.

The discovered facts utterly condemn this theory. We must have some explanation that leaves the cosmos undivided and undefiled, and this means the evanescence of what we call evil in ourselves. It means also a recognition of its inevitable place in the large educational circuit to which our lives are fitted — a terrible reality, as pain is a reality and as error is a reality; and yet, after all, only an incident in evolution. Even sins are limitations inevitable in the progress of life. The fact that God educates the

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soul out of its sins, even in this world, hints the deeper providence that works within the sinner himself. It is atheism to imply that God will bring no triumphant benefit out of our sins. This is not making light of sin, nor does it free the sinner from disgrace, nor does it deny the necessity of punishment for wrong-doing. It is simply a view of human life which makes even its limitations means, under God, to a divine end. God is evermore back of the sin, as a school master, forcing the sinner to sainthood. In this way we escape the atheistic limitation of the old theology which set a devil over against God, but we do not ignore the exceeding sinfulness of sin.

The Church of Tomorrow must not be so optimistic that it shall make people think lightly of their sins, and it must not be so pessimistic as to make people doubt the ultimate triumph of Goodness. It must proclaim a Love that fills all in all.

The Brahmans of India have an intensely acute and spiritual consciousness of God. The Christian who enters intimately and sympathetically into Hindu philosophy, as stated in the more spiritual Upanishads, is both surprised and edified. Certainly, he is surprised to find such lofty teachings respecting God. These oriental mystics have, indeed, almost an oppressive sense of divineness. Instead of being

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without God in the world, the Brahmans see nothing but God! They penetrate below natural phenomena everywhere to the infinite Spirit who is all in all. So intent on God are they that material things often receive little or no attention. So passionately absorbed in thought of absolute Being are they that the human individual almost evaporates out of existence.

But just here we touch the point where the Brahman also lapses into atheism. He finds God as spirit, but he does not adequately find the spiritual in the natural and the human. He is filled with the consciousness of God, but it is often so detached from nature and humanity that he is unable to trace the Infinite in matter with the scientist, or fellowship him in man with the philanthropist. The Hindu, like the "Christian Scientist," worships God, but a God out of touch with many of the solidest realities in the universe. As yet, we cannot tell how that which we call "spirit" and that which we call "matter" are united, but each represents a phase of the infinite Life, and there is as much atheism in the denial of those material realities with which modern science deals as in the denial of spirit. The scientist in his laboratory, searching for the truth of things, is engaged in a reverent quest for God that is more religious than the yearning of the

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Hindu in his forest seclusion to be absorbed into Brahma. It is manifestly impiety to ignore matter; God is also there.

The practical atheism of India has been the failure of its people to investigate the laws of nature, so as to find God and serve him in those things that make for the physical progress and happiness of the race. Famines and pestilences are, to some extent, their punishments. Our ecstatic thought of God as spirit may make us really atheists if it blind us to him who unfolds his orderly life in that material nature which is the mother of us all.

The Brahman is God-intoxicated, yet he fails to recognize the divinity of his brother man. Where the Almighty most fully reveals and incarnates himself, there this believer loses his faith. What is the caste system but a denial of God in man, a practical atheism of blackest character? "God is all," this philosopher declares; and at the same time he treats with utmost contempt that much of God which resides in his brother nearest him. The Hindu consciousness of God is intense, but it is inadequate because it fails to lay hold of that which is divine in humanity. To believe in an infinite Father and at the same time pass by unnoticed the finite children in our neighborhood is to deny the Lord of Life where most at home. To raise one's hand in

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prayer to Varuna, who floods the heavens with light, and hold back the same hand from the lowliest servant who needs the healing balm of our love, is to ignore God where God most needs our service. There is always greater danger that instituted religion will forget man than that it will forget God. It is easier to praise our Heavenly Father than to serve our earthly brother. The atheism most to be condemned is that which fails to find the authority of God in the moral laws present in shop and home, at the polls and on the market.

It was just this thought that created Buddhism. The Buddha rediscovered and forcibly emphasized the divinity in man, whom the Brahmans had ignored. Men were called home to the human divineness. The real atheism of caste was swept aside, and reverence came under the leadership of love and sympathy. To pluck up the roots of sorrow, to place wayward feet in the noble eight-fold path that leads to Blessedness, to make the soul supreme so that no unholy desire shall blur its vision of truth or taint its purity — this was the master spirit of the new faith, a recovery of reverence for the God in man.

But even the Buddhist is not free from atheism. Some have called him altogether atheistic. His great reverence for the human does not rise beyond the human to that parental

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Life, incarnating itself in humanity. His faith in the individual soul does not pass on to faith in the universal Soul. If the Brahman forgets man, the Buddhist forgets God. The worshiper of Brahma fails to bring divineness down to his brother and make it the law of social life, but the follower of Buddha fails to trace divineness up into the cosmos whose infinite Life individualizes itself in man. There is faith with both, but faith arrested at opposite ends; worship also with both, but incomplete. In one the religious sentiment is cut short before its passes downward into sympathy, and in the other it is arrested before it blossoms into praise of the Infinite: both are partially atheistic, but in opposite directions. The Brahman denies the worth and sanctity of his brother and ignores his suffering; the Buddhist sees nothing but that brother, and allows himself no rest until that suffering is relieved, but he fails to trace his own life up to its parental Source. The Brahman, in his surplus of worship, neglects his neighbor; but the Buddhist, in his surplus of pity, forgets God.

Neither Brahman nor Buddhist rightly handles the mighty facts of human desire and human suffering. The former ignores suffering when beyond his caste, and fails of that divine education which issues from ministry to the sorrowing. The latter enriches himself through

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an active love in the service of those in need, but he fails to see the divineness in tears, forgetting that growth through pain is infinitely better than his passionless Nirvana. The Brahman is indifferent to the desire of his lowly brother for progress and happiness. But this desire is given of God, and we can in no other way better serve him than by helping this lowly brother to the realization of all that is best within himself.

The Buddhist looks upon all desires as essentially evil, condemning desire in general because the fruitage of some desires in lawless action is sinful; whereas these yearnings within the human breast are, in their proper activity, a divine urgency, flowing to us directly from God. These longings for truth and purity are a "God-hunger" within the soul, the satisfaction of which is more than temple-worship and as needful as human helpfulness. The Buddhist, who seeks the destruction of all desires, starts from an atheistic philosophy of nature; for the fundamental motives of the soul are good, to be disciplined rather than destroyed. Whoever sees only evil in desire has not discovered the divinity of man. And to go on through suffering to enrichment of life is to discover our real selves and learn the lessons of Providence.

The thought of God has been a constant and dominant though variable constituent of

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Christianity, but even the Christian faith in its most triumphant mood has not been free from the atheistic limitation. The gospel of Jesus is rooted in the Fatherhood of God. Nevertheless its advocates have often so limited the divine paternity by a narrow interpretation of Providence that the world becomes, from the standpoint of the ancient creeds, a vast orphanage, and God himself an absentee from his own estate.

The church has in its best moods proclaimed the doctrine of God's universal Fatherhood, but it has never logically or practically applied this sublime truth in its full sweep. It has too often stopped short at its own little threshold and left the great world outside the Everlasting Arms. It has imprisoned the divine love within its sanctuaries, limited the divine truth to its symbols, and confined the divine salvation to its sacraments. Atheism is deeply implicated in some parts of the traditional creeds, for their implied denials of Fatherhood are more numerous than the affirmations.

This brief review of the limitations even in the teachings of the world's great historic religions respecting God clearly indicates some things which need to be emphasized and also some things which must be avoided by the Church of Tomorrow. It is well thus to glance backward over the history of religion in

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order that we may go forward with greater wisdom.

Several important and practical truths stand out with great distinctness: (1) The intellectual necessity of the thought of God, which is an indispensable element of human life. (2) The supreme moral value of belief in God in every mood and circumstance of life. (3) The doctrine respecting God is helpful so far as it fits the facts of life and it is harmful in proportion to its limitations. (4) Today the supreme need, not alone in religion, but in education and philanthropy, in commerce and citizenship, is the affirmation of an adequate thought of God, commanding the reason, invigorating the will, and stimulating the conscience — a doctrine which includes the spiritual meanings of all discoveries and embraces the yearnings of all hearts. It must be a Supreme Thought that the scientist can take into the laboratory and the student into the library without apology or defense; that the reformer will find helpful in his work among the lowly and the vicious and that will guide the statesman in his administration of national affairs; and that, in its simplicity and sublimity, will appeal with equal persuasiveness to the heart of the child and the mind of the philosopher.

How great the need of clear thinking on this subject at the present time really is may

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be illustrated by brief references to two tendencies which are at work among us in these days. One is what may be called the despair of Herbert Spencer; he is not so prominent or powerful as he was a few years ago, but the negative influence of his teachings still rests like a blight upon many a soul.

The doctrine of Spencer is not really a theory of evolution, but a formula of degradation. He constantly tries to explain the higher in terms of the lower. He refers psychical processes to physical functions, moral sentiments to the instincts of animals, the heavenly hope of a Christ to the mistake of a savage respecting dreams and shadows. He traces conscience, not up to God, but down to the wriggle of a worm! He always asks us to look backward and find the explanation of spirit in mere things. He leads us down to a lower level to find the source of higher forms. He takes no account of "the creative increment." He leaves the "spiritual plus" unexplained; for his addition of material units does not explain what life is or how it evolves. What comes in to make the advance from a lower to a higher organism is something more than the mere addition of a few more units of the old sort.

The pitifully sad consequences of his philosophy may be seen in his own life, in the

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note of hopelessness so evident in the confession which he made very near the close of his days. In contemplating the ultimate outcome of his theorem of evolution he realized that, possibly, at the end of it all, nothing would remain but time and space: just empty space and void time. No wonder that the prospect chilled his heart and wrung from his withered lips a cry of despair! All the vast and innumerable splendors of the material universe vanish and nothing remains of the starry heavens! The numberless glories of the moral realm fade away and only endless silence remains! Even the last tear volatilized into nothingness and the last sigh of agony emptied into a vacuum! This the end of Evolution? Absurdity indescribable! Such a prospect not only freezes the heart: it unhinges the mind and makes all our boasted scientific discoveries worse than the unsubstantial phantasms of a horrible nightmare!

Human life is not possible in such an atmosphere as this. The world cannot long maintain a triumphant course of civic progress under the leadership of such black hopelessness. Such a negation blots out the eyes of the Sistine Madonna, silences every jubilant note of praise, prostrates in the dust every sublime ideal, robs every heart of strength and every hand of skill, and turns men loose without the restraints

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of civilization to scramble like animals simply to satisfy a passing appetite. Into such despairing souls the Church of Tomorrow must carry with power the gospel of Jesus, with its glad faith in God's Fatherhood of infinite love.

And what shall we say of the pragmatic philosophy which is the vogue of the hour, which revives polytheism under the mask of "pluralism," and which tries to satisfy the religious consciousness by proclaiming the doctrine that God is simply "a fact among facts." Surely, to some earnest minds this is a more deadly form of atheism than the crass denial of an Ingersoll or the brutal negation of a Bradlaugh. A God who is merely "a fact among facts" is no God at all: before such a formula all that was inspiring in the company of pagan divinities vanishes. If Amos and Isaiah had thought of Jehovah as only "a fact among facts," would any oracles of divine beauty and power ever have fallen from their lips? Would the thought of God as a "fact" in a mass of driftwood on the mighty stream of time ever have moved the ancient psalmist or the modern poet to break forth into gladsome songs of praise?

A God who is just "a fact among facts" is not even a respectable devil, and instead of solving the problem of evil, this teaching merely hides it behind a verbal mask, too thin to

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deceive the thinker and too obvious to help the doubter. An interpretation of the universe which proclaims a God who is no more than a "fact among facts" denies the unity which science everywhere traces, blindfolds the eye of discovery, cuts the nerve of reverence, seals the lips of praise, supplants harmony with discord, and sends the soul adrift upon a sea swept by diverse winds, with no guiding star and no pilot adequate to insure entrance into any haven of rest. There will be no Church of Tomorrow if the best that philosophy can tell us is that God is simply a fact among facts!

Commercialism has invaded the realm of the spirit, and it now engages the attention of students at the great seats of learning with eloquent expositions of "the cash value" of a belief in God! But a man who worships God because such devotion is *useful* (even in the highest meaning of the term) has not discovered the divine Father, while his prayer, if he prayed at all, which is doubtful, would be little better than the barter of the street. In fact, we may take it for granted that a man who comes to think of praying as simply *useful* will cease to pray. Friends may be useful and love may have a "cash value," but utility is not the root of friendship and true love belongs to a world where mere values are not calculated.

What is true necessarily has a value, and

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utility is a rough test of the truth in doctrines and methods. What works must, of necessity, be somewhat in harmony with the law of the universe. But we grope in mental and spiritual darkness when we approach life chiefly from the side of *utility* and apply the standard of *mere values* to human experience. We shall never get into the real Church of God by this door. The thought of God is not born of selfishness, and Christian nurture means wearing a yoke and bearing a cross rather than running after profits. The world remembers and honors those who have died in bestowing blessings rather than those who have been keenest in discovering and inventing utilities.

The thought of God is, as has been stated, a commanding necessity of our moral and intellectual life. We cannot free ourselves from it. It is implied in the processes of thinking. We may deny the truth of this or that teaching respecting the Infinite, but somewhere in our interpretation of the universe this Reality will emerge under some name; somewhere in our explanation of life the parental Verity will be assumed. It is a thought in constant flux, for life itself, to whose varying limits it is evermore fitted, is an evolution; but while variable in form, it is perpetually present in some form, sometimes wearing a human disguise and sometimes under cover of negation itself. Often

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we outgrow our real atheism by leaving behind ancient ideals of deity.

The necessity is not so much, however, that we merely say "God" as that we make the word mean something worthy him whom it symbolizes and spiritually helpful to him who uses it. It is a sublimely inspiring word if it is made to comprehend the sublimity of truth and the inspiration of love. But we may lift up reverent hands in the elaborate worship of a vast temple and yet be near the verge of atheism if we limit the family of God to those who worship in that place. What we need as a tonic atmosphere, in which to grow more divinely strong and beautiful, is a thought of God rooted in a trust deeper than texts, speaking in prayers that are more than petty petitions, creating a reverence commensurate with truth and goodness, inspiring a fellowship which embraces all that is human, and perfecting the hope of a heaven that is more than escape from the punishment of sin.

The richest fruitage of the spirit is a thought of God that links itself with all that is beautiful in nature; that embraces all souls in its providential ministries; that finds revelation wherever truth is discovered and divine service wherever truth is lived, and in the fulness of love and sympathy casts out the atheism latent in every form of inhumanity. The Church of

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Tomorrow must deepen and broaden man's consciousness of God that it may irrigate his whole nature with the waters of a mighty river of life, which shall also provide the motive power to operate all the machinery of his private and public affairs.

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IV. ITS WORSHIP: THE FRUITFULNESS OF PRAYER

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TOPICS

THE ANTIQUITY OF PRAYER — WORSHIP AND THE ARTS — THE ETHICAL IMPORTANCE OF REVERENCE — MODERN DIFFICULTIES ABOUT PRAYER — THE EXAMPLES OF PAUL AND JESUS — THE PROBLEM STATED — WHAT PRAYER CANNOT DO — MISTAKES ABOUT THE REIGN OF LAW — MAN MORE THAN PHYSICAL ORGANISM — UNSCIENTIFIC SCIENCE — DIVINE SONSHIP NECESSITATES PRAYER — THE MANY FUNCTIONS OF WORSHIP — ITS PLACE IN THE CHURCH SERVICE — IMPORTANCE OF PUBLIC WORSHIP — WILL THE COMING MAN PRAY? — MICROSCOPE AND PRAYER-BOOK — HELPFULNESS DURING THEOLOGICAL TRANSITION — YOUNG PEOPLE AND WORSHIP — SUGGESTIONS RESPECTING THE CONDUCT OF WORSHIP — CONGREGATIONAL WORSHIP: "COMMON PRAYER" — THE DIVINE CONTRIBUTIONS TO LIFE.

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IV. ITS WORSHIP: THE FRUITFULNESS OF PRAYER

PRAYER is the oldest element in religion. It is the spark that was struck out of the human soul by its first conscious contact with the universe. When the primitive man began to think about the powers in nature ever active around him, he also began not only to wonder, but to worship. He sought by varied offerings and torturing rites to secure the friendship of those mysterious beings in whose presence he felt utterly helpless and before whose activities he bowed, often more in terror than in love. He, however, acted up to the level of his intelligence and conscience. His prayers were obviously superstitious, but they were genuine. Before we harshly condemn him for the errors in his actions let us remember that we are still engaged in the same quest — adjustment to our environment; and let us also remember that much in our more scientific actions will seem exceedingly foolish to our distant descendants. His worship was crude, chiefly an expression of fear, but a sense of mystery worked in his breast; and that far-off service, which began in superstition, became in time a spiritual ministry.

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It was, therefore, a true instinct which moved the early man to worship, however mistaken his methods, and although very imperfect, his devotions after all carried a surplus of spiritual benefit, because the sentiment of reverence thereby expressed and cultivated exerted a lifting power and carried a moral restraint, which were fundamental factors that made cities and civilizations possible. The worship of God reacts in many vital ways for the good of men. Every human association is ennobled and enriched by the inspiring and constraining consciousness that God resides and presides in all such social relations. The constraint of the God-consciousness, whether on the low level of selfish fear or on the heights of adoring love, has been the greatest civilizing power operative among human beings. The worship of God has taken men out of the herd or mere aggregation of animals and compacted them by spiritual bonds into human society.

The conviction that it is more important to have the favor of God than the friendship of man is an intuition with scientific basis. Man has felt that his worship of God was supremely helpful because it introduced him to the Almighty, whose anger no human arm can withstand and whose love is a greater protection than all human agencies. The main

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reason why men have been so cruel in religious affairs is the fact that the friendship of God, secured through religious service, is rightly felt to be vastly more important than any transient or superficial human interest, just as a slight to one's mother is resented when the same behavior toward a stranger would not be noticed. A neighbor may shelter for a night, but only God can open the door of heaven. And worship has, therefore, been felt to be infinitely precious, because through it man passes into the very heart of God and his whole life is clothed with the mysterious sanctions and infinite blessings of the Almighty.

The apparent clash, which at times arises between our human duties and our duties to God, presents a problem which needs careful handling by the modern minister of religion. It does at times seem that we must be cruel to our brother if we continue loyal to God. At other times we seem forced to ignore God if we serve man. The conflict comes in a thousand ways, often exceedingly painful, while the reconciliation of these contending forces is frequently difficult. The church needs to exercise more wisdom at this point than it has sometimes exhibited. It must be, and it may be, shown that, fundamentally, God's demand and man's need are really identical; that God never asks us to injure our neighbor, and that

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true service beneficial to man is included in our obligations to God. We are always loyal to God when helpful to his children, and reverence for the highest always makes us most serviceable to the lowliest friend. Seeking the friendship of God in worship helps our human friendliness, and opening the sources of mystery quickens the moral nature.

Worship, then, is the oldest element and one of the most precious functions, not only of religion, but of civilization. Prayer to God is more ancient than all doctrines about him. Men felt after and tried to commune with God through their hearts long before an altar was erected, or an idol consecrated, or a descriptive name for deity was coined. The soul worshiped in wordless prayer long before psalmists arose, as the eyes still see much that the lips cannot describe. This inner urgency broke into vocal praise just as soon as men achieved rhythmical speech. In fact, this spiritual experience, the growing consciousness of God, in trying to articulate itself, created poetry and commissioned the prophet.

So, too, worship is older than all Bibles, temples, or ceremonials; they are all indeed the servants and symbols of this imperial sentiment. It moved the pen that wrote every line of ecstatic praise and formulated every command from Decalogue to Golden Rule. It

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trained the hands that set up altar stones and reared sacred walls all the way from Stonehenge to St. Peter's. It has been, and still is, the mother of all the arts. It fashioned every musical device and finally set up the pipes of the organ through which the spirit of man utters its hopes and fears, its penitence and gladness. It made stone and canvas symbolize every grace that is possible to man and portray every creation of beauty that imagination can invent, lighting the eyes of madonnas and rounding the immortal figures of classic Greece. Eloquence first found its tongue of persuasive power in describing the majesty of God and in pleading with men for obedience to his divine law.

A scientific interpretation of human life must take account of the vast ethical importance of worship. The doctrine of evolution assumes the two supreme factors: the shaping influence of environment and the creative push from within. And a large element in the creative push is the religious sentiment which finds its expression in praise and prayer. The consciousness of God introduces into life the element that lifts the animal to the human estate. The firmament becomes the habitation of a Friend, the horizon glows with the prospect of immortality, the whole earth unfolds as the scene of combat with evil and of victory for the good.

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In the mood of devotion, conscience was born, the feeling and the seeing that in the togetherness of life an almighty Being is present beseeching, rebuking, rewarding. The primitive sense of moral obligation was intimately connected with the feeling that the tribe in its life-blood shares the very blood of its God, something to be held sacred and protected. All ancient rites and customs show how manners and morals were bound up with worship. The "I ought" came out of the sense of the presence of a third person, the invisible and inexorable Judge. So that the efficiency of conscience is indissolubly linked with the consciousness of God. Reverence for the Highest keeps that inner reservoir full, so that every contact with a human being simply turns the faucet and applies to these relations an abundant motive.

The primitive community was linked together about a common altar; its strength and joy lay, not in the common ownership of land, but in the consciousness of a common access to God. The hearthstone was sacred, not simply because kindred were gathered about it, but because God there met the assembled family. The guest was honored, not merely because a human being, but because a son of God. A very large part of the evils of modern society are due to the fact that this consciousness of God has vanished from our human associa-

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tions, and if the Church of Tomorrow shall not be able to revive in us, through a more genuine and impressive worship, an adequate reverence for God, the moral collapse of modern civilization will be certain and complete.

The worship of God does for the soul what connection with the electric power-house does for the electric automobile: it fills its storage batteries with motive power. It lets into the human heart a spiritual current from the inexhaustible universe of God. Worship, then, is not so much an asking as a receiving; not so much a petition as a participation; not so much a changing of God's attitude to us as a communion with God's spirit in us; not so much an arrest of his uplifted hand as an appropriation of his love and truth; not so much the winning of his favor and forgiveness as the welcoming of his presence and power. It needs no extensive study of human life to show that behind every great achievement there was a greater aspiration; that behind every victory on earth for truth and justice there was a vitalizing association with him who is absolute Truth and infinite Justice; and that behind every noble work there was a nobler mood of worship of him who evermore works for all the children of men.

To live a wholesome and vigorous life as physical beings the whole pressure of the

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atmosphere must be constantly exerted upon our material organism. To live the divinest life of the spirit possible to us we must constantly realize that God is present; we need the constant pressure of the divine Spirit as much as our bodies need the atmospheric pressure. The surest way to make our lives moral is through worship to keep our hearts conscious of the fact that we live in a moral universe. Spiritual communion with him who is infinite Righteousness is the most powerful incentive and assurance that we ourselves live a righteous life among our neighbors.

There are many, however, in these days who have serious doubts respecting the subject of prayer. The difficulties at this point are both old and new. The old difficulty of the merely undevout is always with us, like color-blindness; some men see no good in prayer because they have no spiritual vision. But new difficulties have arisen due to the intellectual conditions of our age: how to reconcile prayer with the triumphant doctrine of the reign of law. Is there any use of praying in a universe of immutable order? As this question of the efficacy of prayer is fundamental to the whole subject of worship, which must occupy a large place in the Church of Tomorrow, a brief discussion of this important theme is here imperative. And we may well begin our con-

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sideration of this problem by a passing reference to two of the spiritual leaders of humanity.

When Paul at the close of one of his early letters wrote the apostolic command, "Pray without ceasing," he evidently thought of prayer not as mere petitional beggary, but as a constant attitude of devotion. He doubtless regarded it as the spirit of a life rather than as a perfunctory performance. To him, if this interpretation is correct, prayer was the method for the glad expression of life's divinest yearnings rather than a means for securing material well-being; an activity of the soul for giving purity and richness to the spiritual life instead of an agency for reaching physical results by some sort of supernatural path across lots.

We are carried along the same lines to the same conclusion when we study the teaching and example of Jesus, that great master in the realm of our divine and eternal interests. To him prayer was the means, not for the display, but for the cultivation of piety; not a method of propitiation so much as a spiritual climate in which to commune with the Eternal and grow into the kingdom of heaven. Jesus never used, he never commanded anyone else to use, prayer as an instrument for the violation of natural laws or as a magical method for securing physical results contrary to the ordinary course of nature. Prayer, indeed, seems

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to have been to him the gesture of the soul in its expression of gladness and trust and in its quest for larger life and more complete obedience. And in the supreme moment of his career he did not pray for the order of nature to be violated or the course of events pricking him with agony to be changed, but with supreme confidence and heroic resignation he simply prayed, "Thy will, O Father, not mine, be done!"

Some scholars have held that Jesus' command respecting "closet-prayers" (Matthew vi. 6) is a condemnation of public worship. But a brief allusion to two facts clearly and completely dispels this mistake: (1) Jesus was not condemning public prayers, but hypocritical prayers, and (2) The church which his friends organized continued the custom of public prayer, which they would not have done if contrary to his teaching. Also, his condemnation of "vain repetitions" does not prohibit the use of a liturgy. It is not a *vain* repetition when the husband uses the old words of affection in speaking to his wife, provided they really express what is in his heart. So too, frequently used phrases of devotion are not "vain repetitions," provided they describe an actual feeling. There is danger here, the danger of mere formalism, but long use also gives grace and power. The familiar symbol acquires an increasing

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effectiveness of suggestion, so that its frequent use has psychological warrant.

There are several things which stand before us prominently at the very threshold of this discussion. The universality of prayer among men in all ages; the fact that the greatest and best in their moments of supreme joy and most terrible sorrows have spontaneously fled to prayer for refuge and thanksgiving; the obvious outcome of devout prayers in new courage and refinement of spirit — the practical fruitage in thousands of lives — these facts indicate that prayer does somehow stand for a commanding reality.

Beneath the superstitions associated with prayer, and they have been many; in spite of the gross and trivial ends toward which it has been directed, and its misuse has been widespread — still down at the bottom there must be some abiding verity. Through its crudest and most mistaken exercise there must have run some helpful ministry or this attitude would not have been maintained through the centuries. During all the long ages men would not have presented themselves so earnestly and unceasingly in suppliant attitudes that strengthen and in jubilant moods that chasten had they not in these ways been rewarded with glorious visions and sweet melodies of a diviner life. Thus the appeal to human experience creates

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the presumption in favor of prayer as a legitimate and fruitful method in the economy of our spiritual life.

On the other hand, it is true that the modern mind has committed itself unreservedly to the scientific interpretation of nature, which to many has seemed the negation of prayer. No ancient notion or venerable agency can survive in this intensely realistic atmosphere unless it can pass the test of experience and show a basis in the facts of the universe. Whoever lays bare a new fact reveals the throne at which science serves, and even the worshipful heart has learned to plead, "Let me build my altar only of those realities which remain when criticism has done its work and discovery has completed its task."

Whether religion stand or fall, whether prayer abide or vanish, the man instructed by science has given his unbounded allegiance to one central principle — to conform his thought and life to the facts themselves, whatever they may be; and here we find the highest expression of a rational faith — a faith in the real divinity of the universe. So that our interpretation of prayer must adjust itself to the facts. How far prayer may be reasonable or effectual must depend upon the constitution of these realms of matter and spirit which make up the divine order, of which we are a part. The ministry

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of prayer, its limits and its possibilities, must be determined by an appeal to these realities — and to all the realities, we must remember; for whatever the facts are, they are the facts which condition our life, and they are divine facts.

The extremes of the problem respecting the efficacy of prayer are perfectly clear, and about them there is nowhere any dispute. No one would expect a prayer, however urgent or universal, that the sun rise an hour earlier tomorrow morning, to be answered. We take this position, not because we believe so little in God, but because we believe so much in the transcendent divineness of the natural order. In fact, so great is our reverence for him who resides in all facts, that to us such a petition would seem an impiety. It is irreligious to try to produce results contrary to the methods of God's providence — to raise grain by magic rather than by labor. Supreme reverence accepts the universe as it is.

On the other hand, a desire for holiness, rising from the mysterious depths of the soul, and putting itself forth as a commanding urgency in all the ranges of human effort — such a prayer, as the most undevout materialist would acknowledge, will necessarily be answered, for the answer to it is wrapped up in its own urgency. The very desire creates the thing

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desired, and the answer comes from God because he resides in the spiritual organism through which the prayer operates. Now the problem, made difficult to many by the conflict going on in their minds between the traditional notions of religion and scientific discoveries, is to decide how far the efficacy of prayer extends between these extremes.

There are certain definite answers which we can readily give to some of the questions which are asked us respecting this subject. When, for instance, the question is asked, Does prayer ever do any good? the reply must be, That depends very much upon what that prayer is. If one prays for pleasant weather, we must all hold that such a prayer cannot possibly do any good. The office of prayer is not to govern the weather, but to help us govern ourselves if the weather does not fit our convenience. And this conclusion we reach, not because we doubt the existence of God, not because nature seems to us undivine, not because we fail to see a Providence reaching from crystal to star, but simply because, as we read the facts upon which the weather depends, the prayer of man is not one of its determining conditions. In this department prayer does not operate as a cause; but this does not make the department undivine, nor does it make all prayer useless. The acquisition of Greek does not depend upon

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the climate — and yet Greek is a valuable study — while there are thousands of things which do depend upon the climate. When we refrain from praying for good weather we are not undevout: we simply respect the universe as God has made it. To use fire rather than ice to accomplish a given purpose is to obey a divine law. If our prayer that ice do the same thing fails, the failure is no proof that prayer is useless in other realms or that nature is heartless.

Does prayer, then, do any good? That depends upon the character of our prayer. It is certainly not a substitute for physical forces. But if prayer be a joyous meditation which brings us into that serenity which is strength, then to ask whether such prayer is answered is like asking whether study is ever rewarded. The answer to each is included in the very mechanism of the soul (to use a very inexact phrase), which makes both prayer and study possible.

A glance at the radiant faces of parents as their sons and daughters receive their diplomas on commencement day makes all this clear. How many a mother's prayers are then answered! If the mother-heart had not yearned, no diplomas would then be distributed! And in all this there has been no violation of law, but a life of love under law. Love *is* under law,

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and yet, to the touch of love the universe is fluid and obedient.

There are those who have been so deeply impressed, we might say almost oppressed, by the vast magnitude of the universe as disclosed by modern science that they find it impossible to think that the infinite God will hear their prayers. They feel that it is not possible that the Almighty, who filleth the heavens with his glory and might, will pay any attention to the prayers of one so small and insignificant as a mere man. This is the view that paralyzes, but there is another view of the same fact which inspires and comforts. Just because God filleth all in all, just because he is so great, he doth tabernacle here in us, overhearing our thoughts and reporting his own love in our love. Just because so infinite, he is on the spot to shape the snow crystals when the vapor freezes; and if architect of the snowflake, will he not know our desire, which could not have become a desire had he not been present to help it into being?

Whenever we expand our breast to breathe we call upon the infinite God for life, and he answers us by kindling afresh the fires upon the thousand altars of our physical being within the mystic cells of our vital tissues. We are not too small to be heeded, and our demand as an animal upon nature's resources is honored,

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and God himself renews our life; for his answering blessing flows to us on every breath we breathe. And when our soul makes that higher demand upon him, when we attempt to breathe that breath of life which feeds the altar fires of hope and love and holiness, when our desire goes out in prayer for increase of Inner Life, will not he who responded to the call of our body hear and answer the demand of our soul? Will not the resources of him who is spirit flow to our spirit as naturally, though by other processes, as the outer universe faithfully gives itself in service to our body?

But here the advocate of natural law in its severer aspects interposes with his objection, which seems to many persons to sweep prayer out of existence, as a reasonable method of spiritual dynamics, into the discredited realm of mere superstitions. We are asked, Do you expect that your prayer, the selfish wish or mere whim of a frail human being, will change the order of nature or violate the law established by the Almighty? This does appear tremendously unreasonable, and here is a valid argument against much that goes under the name of prayer. As already stated, we must be obedient to the facts of this universe. All prayers that attempt to set aside divine realities are certainly useless, and reveal a lack of intelligent faith in God.

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But does prayer necessarily seek to violate the law of nature, or is the prayerful spirit essentially a petition that the order of the universe be changed? Is it not possible that the answer to true prayer flows out from God by processes as much under law and order as the growth of the tree or the creation of poem or cathedral? One florist leaves the box in which he has planted flower-seeds uncovered and flat on the ground. Another covers his with glass and tips it up toward the sun, that its rays may fall more directly upon it. This latter florist does not violate nature, but he will hand you a bouquet long before the plants of his neighbor are half-grown. May not this be the precise difference between the prayerful and the undevout soul? In placing himself in the attitude of reverence and surrounding himself by the fostering atmosphere of aspiration, the man of prayer gains a more life-giving relation to the Source of all being, and thus blossoms earlier into the beauty of holiness, but by processes as natural, though belonging to another realm, as those used by the gardener.

And may it not be that the true office of prayer, after all, is not so much (in fact, is not at all) to violate the law of nature as it is to put us into the ways of God, that we may the more easily reach the end of our being?

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It is not to set aside, but to bring us into harmony with divine law. There is an interpretation of prayer to which the advocate of the scientific idea of law can make no objection, for it is built upon this very idea of law. Prayer is that desire of the soul which carries us farthest into the sunshine of the spiritual world, hastening our blossom time as we go. And the answer implies no violation of natural order. It comes, not from violation of the laws of nature, but through obedience to the methods of our own being.

There is no real reason why reference to the reign of law, as taught by science, should chill the human heart, as it often does. The reign of law, however described, must leave a place for *me* as the spiritual child of God who is Spirit, and also a place for all that I am! Nature must be given an interpretation big enough to embrace love as well as gravity, human heroism as well as chemical affinity, Jesus as well as Darwin. Our spiritual feelings are facts as well as our physical functions. Science must not overwork my relation to the beast of the field and ignore my inheritance from the Father of Spirits. No appeal to the reign of law must destroy the reign of love. The theory of law as mechanical necessity must not obscure that other law which is spirit. And we must remember that all laws are laws

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of God who has perfect freedom as well as infinite power.

We must remember, also, that man stands at the meeting point of two realms — two worlds unite in him; by what mystic cords the union is made no one can tell. The fact is obvious; its explanation neither science nor philosophy can give. On the one hand, man is a part of that material universe where physical results must be reached by the use of physical agencies. To build a bridge, to move a train, to raise a crop certain physical means must be employed. All the prayers of all the saints could never span the river with a bridge, nor move a train the smallest fraction of an inch, nor produce a more abundant harvest.

The failure of prayer to accomplish such results is not because there is no God, not because nature is undivine, but because in this realm prayer is not an appropriate or dynamic agency. To attempt to produce these results in the world of matter by the use of any except physical means is so far an act of impiety; it is so far a disloyalty to the divine order, an act of practical atheism. The simple fact is that God has not given human desire a mechanical efficiency in the physical world any more than he has given the force of gravity a psychological efficiency in the world of human thought. The ancient farmer offered a sacrifice and prayed

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in order to secure good crops, but the modern farmer, who shapes his labors according to the science of agriculture, is the more religious laborer.

And yet, true prayer is not ruled out of even these realms by this interpretation. Whatever helps the bridge-builder, the engineer, and the farmer to a diviner life makes possible a stronger bridge, a safer train, a better harvest. And these results illustrate the benefits of worship, as they flow from above into this lower world: not that this is the conscious intent of the worshiper, but the natural and inevitable result of his devotions.

The objection is often made to this general view of the subject that it places a cruel Fate on the throne of the universe. All things are put by this theory, it is asserted, under the reign of an inexorable and unsympathetic law; we are bound fast in an unchangeable order, where love pleads in vain for the victim in the path of the crushing wheels, and where mercy has no power to save. And there are those who cry out against this despotism of unmoral energy or brute force. We must believe, we are told, in a God of mercy who, in answer to our prayer, will overrule these physical laws and rescue the sufferer. We must believe in a Heart of Love who, in answer to our love, will rearrange nature to save our dear ones!

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This is not an infrequent nor a very strange demand. But those who make it are stronger in pious sentiment than in rational thought. Overrule a physical law to rescue sufferers? This implies lack of faith in the divinity of the law: it implies a positive cruelty in the law which causes the suffering. We ought not to think so poorly of nature's laws. One may, indeed, ask that they be overruled so that the sufferer be rescued. But is not this an irreligious figure of speech, which wrongfully assigns imperfection and injustice to the laws? You would reconstruct nature to make it more divine! But were not all these apparent mishaps of our day seen from the beginning, when nature was first ordered, and compensations provided in the great sweep of things?

There is another way of looking at this matter. May we not find the mercy of God in the order of nature itself, so that, instead of speaking despairingly of the despotism of force, we may see infinite love where all was apparently so darkly fateful, while the very uniformity or rigidity of nature, against which we so protested and to remove which we resorted to prayer — may it not, after all, be the expression of a love greater than we had imagined? The fact that in the railroad wreck the iron bar did not bend before your entreaty to let your dear one escape may have led you

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to conclude that nature is cruel. But when you look at that marvelous web of iron and steel suspended high in the air above the river, over which thousands pass daily from city to city in safety, just because there is an established order in nature and iron is always iron, then is it not possible to feel that the supreme mercy of God is in the order of nature, that what we carelessly called a despotism of force is in reality the providence of love, and that our prayers are not needed to soften what we had hastily called the cruelty of law?

So that, instead of saying, This must be a loveless world unless prayer can change the natural order, we come to that higher reverence which sees that this would be a very undivine universe if prayer had such efficacy, if these material forces could be jostled about by the desires of every pious but short-sighted soul. And all through the ages the abuse of prayer has been this attempt to secure by it what can only come through the application of physical agencies. For whatever prayer may be in its own sphere, we have learned enough of this universe to see that the most devout human petition has no magic power to set aside the physical laws of nature or to secure for us instantaneously what the processes of nature need long periods to evolve.

But man is something more than physical

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body; he is linked to another realm, the spiritual order, which has methods and processes peculiar to itself. And these must be as loyally obeyed, to build a noble character and secure the fruits of the spirit, as the principles of mechanics in constructing a machine. The trouble comes from carrying over the methods of one realm into the other, where they are inoperative. We often wrongfully attempt to produce on one level of existence certain results by processes which belong to another order of creation. And when we fail, our failure is not due to the fact that the universe is undivine or our method useless in its proper place, but to the fact that we have made an unlawful application of our efforts. We cannot raise a hundred pound weight by prayer, for we are here in a realm where mechanical energy is needed. But the crushing weight of sorrow or shame pressing upon a human heart cannot be lifted by the most powerful engine, for we are here in a realm of the spirit, where only the dynamics of love can avail. So that he who uses prayer as substitute for mechanical energy is to that extent unscientific and irreligious, and he who ignores this spiritual side of our life and neglects those methods for its enrichment of which prayer is one is also so far unscientific and irreligious.

We must remember that the human soul is in touch with the Father of Spirits, between

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whom and ourselves there are methods of access as direct as between our body and the material universe. Our love pours into us from him as directly as the sun furnishes the energy by which our hearts beat. Organs of spiritual communication exist between our souls and the infinite Soul, just as channels of vitality bind our bodies to the resources of the material universe. By spiritual processes we feed on him who is Spirit, as by physical functions we appropriate our powers of body from the world of matter. And the office of prayer is simply a practical application of that fundamental truth of life and religion: "In him we live and move and have our being."

Prayer, then, is not a mere beggary and not a selfish performance, but a function of the soul, by which we appropriate from God that life which constitutes our spirituality. It is not an operative agent in the realm of physical facts, but, far better and higher, a process by which we enrich ourselves as spiritual beings from the reservoir of divine life. For we lie as inlets about the great ocean of being, and it is prayer which lifts the gate between, that our ripple of desire may report itself to the waiting life beyond, and also that the swelling tides of that Creativeness may rush into us and lift us out of weakness. To change the figure, we spring as buds out of the mystical tree of

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life; prayer pulls into us by an economy all its own, but as natural in its way as that which feeds the leaves on every shrub, those spiritual energies which refresh and enrich our own Inner Life.

The scope and agency of prayer lie, then, within the realm of our spiritual life; no less divine and no less needed because not an agency for setting aside the material order, but more divine and more needed because a method by which we appropriate the energies and perfect the qualities which enrich us as sons and daughters of the living God.

Prayer is also an attitude of reverence, the attitude of every sane mind as it looks out upon this wondrous universe, a sweet and solemn mood, in which we feel the glory of our sonship, the vastness of our heritage, the sacredness of our responsibilities. This is a feeling of immense value on the market and in the home, for it braces us when we are weak, restrains us in moments of waywardness, and overarches every humble task with mystery and solemnity.

Prayer is, moreover, a method of communion by which we realize the affiliations of our own lives with the infinite Life, feeling the love of our frail hearts descending into us from one who is absolute Love, and tracing our thoughts to their rootage in one who is supreme Truth.

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Prayer, too, is an act of aspiration by which we mount from what is low and narrow and ignoble to our diviner possibilities, the deep desire in us laying hold of the spiritual resources which God always keeps in readiness by the side of every soul that asks for light and love. Does someone say that this makes prayer simply a petition to one's self, which has only a reflex or subjective influence? But where shall we find God if not in our own soul? What we think and feel in our inmost being are the points of closest contact with the Almighty: it is there that our fellowship with him abounds. It is not prayer to ourselves, but prayer in ourselves to him by whom we live. And that the outcome of our prayer is primarily subjective is all that we can expect and all that we really need: love, hope, holiness — these are, indeed, subjective; but if prayer will help us to these, it is enough.

And yet, the whole story is not told when it is stated that the results of prayer are subjective. The subjective results of prayer inevitably tend to become most public blessings. The subjective surplus of life within the breast, induced by prayer, immediately reports itself in victorious services on the other side of the earth: in the patriot's heroism, in the zeal of the missionary, or in the fast flying letter of love that brings home a wayward son!

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When prayer recreates the heart, its primary and immediate end is reached, but then the heart begins to move the hands to recreate the world. It is, therefore, no discredit to prayer, as the flippant remark often implies, that its operation lies within the spiritual realm. It is out of this realm that the supreme achievements of life proceed. How often, indeed, we fail to see the real answers to prayer because we look for strange signs and wonders, when in fact the answers have come as falls the dew and spreads the autumn glory!

But, after all, we must bear in mind, while discussing the subject of prayer, the great truth that, as in the case of love and patriotism, what can be said or written is only a small fraction of what is really true and actually felt. Words are very inadequate symbols of our deeper experiences. And these are matters, not of logic, but of experience. We can never argue any man into an act of worship. The best that we can do is to point the way and present an example. And this is evermore the task of the church of God.

If in mid-ocean the shaft of the steamer breaks, the divine thing to do is not to pray that winds and waves be stilled, but to mend the shaft. But we sail across another ocean, our souls are ships upon the sea of infinite Being; and there it is prayer that spreads the

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sails that catch the winds of the spirit that will bear us toward the haven where abides the peace of God.

The Church of Tomorrow must do all that it can to make general and powerful among men this spiritual interpretation of human life in order that the habit of prayer may become as common as it once was. If people can be made to realize the dignity and glory of their divine sonship, prayer will follow as a matter of course, not simply as a part of the church service, but as a regular mood and method of life. And the more prayer becomes a personal concern, the more the public worship of the church will be helped. If, then, it is important to have a prayerful people, we must realize that the first effective step to that end is to establish far and wide those views of life which give to prayer a substantial reason and a rational warrant for existence. When the individual awakes to the full consciousness of the supremely important fact that he has a spiritual nature, then he will quickly resort to those means best calculated to give that element in his life satisfaction and development. So that the church must see to it that the spiritual interpretation of human nature, of which prayer is the necessary expression, is forced upon the attention of the reason and conscience of mankind.

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This view of life, which makes prayer seem not only reasonable but necessary, has been presented at some length for this special purpose. It is needless to plead for private prayer or public worship until people discover themselves as souls, as children of the living God. Two other matters now require some attention: (1) The importance of public worship, and (2) The best means for making the devotional service of the church — more attractive and popular? — No! More impressive and more helpful along the lines of true Christian nurture.

Public worship reaches deeper into the life of man and sweeps a wider circle of human interests than any other part of the church service. It satisfies the constant and precious longings of the soul for communion and companionship. The homesick heart finds in adoration and aspiration the peace that passeth understanding. In the warm and serene atmosphere of devotion the discord and disquietude vanish; the wearied spirit finds rest; the storms of passion are stilled, the wide horizon opens; the great memories of life's infinite mercies spread themselves like clouds of glory over all the landscape of our life; out of the sweet music of wonder and trust and hope come the joy that regenerates and the strength that gladdens.

Worship, in these and other ways, provides

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a moral tonic that far surpasses scientific investigation or theological disquisition. It brings man face to face, not with physical processes nor with metaphysical enigmas, but with the Lord of Life who is Spirit, with the Judge of the heart who is Justice, and with the Creator who is Holiness. For my companion in great danger or temptation give me a man with a commanding reverence.

There are thoughtless people who refer lightly to the worship of the church as an "introductory service." Introductory to what? Shall communion with God serve only as introduction to a discussion of baptism or apostolic succession? Shall reverence for the Most High merely prepare us to debate Calvinism or the theory of single tax? Shall the holy mood of devotion be simply the preface to a half hour of homiletical rhetoric? If introductory to anything it is to companionship with the Lord God Almighty in whom we live, move, and have our being! Worship has an end in itself: no makeshift to occupy the time while people assemble; no fringe to adorn a homily; no vestibule into the temple: it is itself the temple. While in no sense merely preparatory to the sermon, it is by the warmth which it brings that we are made plastic to the preacher's word of entreaty and rebuke. It is the spirit of God that it breathes through the soul, which

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fills the words of the sermon, like sails, so that they move us across the great and wide sea of life!

It is undoubtedly a fact that more persons, the world over, attend church to have a worn and wretched heart revived and cheered than to have an inquisitive mind instructed. More go to be comforted than to be indoctrinated. More go to be filled with motive power than to be loaded with creeds. More go to forsake sin and escape sorrow than to learn about Moses and Socrates. The text may be forgotten, but the ecstacy of devotion will sing itself through many days. The point of the sermon may be missed, but the penitence prompted will long shape many a tender act. The argument of the preacher may not convince the understanding, but the heart actually made to feel the divine Presence will henceforth beat in harmony with nobler ideals of life.

The immense importance of public worship, especially in a season of religious uncertainty and theological transition, is a truth that needs special attention. Man remains a religious being, though he may reject the creed of his ancestors and close the Bible of his mother. He may change his theology, as he does his coat, but the hunger of the soul is constant. He may cease to be a Calvinist or a Trini-

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tarian, he may even become a skeptic or an agnostic, but he is still a worshiper, because human. His interest in the discussions of Augustine and Luther, in the sermons of Edwards and Wesley, may die; but however far he may wander from home, the majestic tones of the *Te Deum* or the plaintive cry, "Love Divine, all love excelling," will sweep through his soul like the creative breath of spring. Science may change all our ideas of the blooming rose bush, but the appreciation of its beauty remains. And that, after all, is one of the best things in life. So, too, science may reconstruct all our theories of the universe, or even make some doubtful of the personality of God, but the beauty of holiness remains, and the yearning for spiritual peace demands satisfaction.

A nobly human and truly catholic worship is dissolvent of sectarianism. It is through the door of devotion rather than by academic discussion or conference decree that the once warring and still differing faiths are being led toward fellowship and cooperation. We are discovering that while we cannot believe alike — what is really unnecessary and impossible — we can worship together; for spiritual reverence is as universal as sunshine, and no church has any monopoly of it. And if the Church of Tomorrow shall rise to its great opportunity,

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its leaders must make sure that its services of worship shall perform all these precious ministries.

We sometimes hear the question: Will the future man pray? As sensible to ask: Will the future man love and marry? Progress in life does not mean progress away from worship, which is an essential function of life, but progress in the forms of devotion. So that as long as man remains human he will continue devout. It cannot be that the more we discover respecting the universe, the less mysterious nature will become and the cheaper life will appear. Is it not true that many are silent today because the old phrases do not seem adequate to express their reverence? What the Church of Tomorrow must do is to help these people to give expression to their sense of mystery and yearning for holiness by a service so simple that it shall command every heart and so sensible that every mind shall feel its appropriateness.

Outgrow worship? Yes, when there are no more sins to trouble conscience, no more temptations to resist, no more sorrows to bear. Outgrow worship? Yes, when no mother arms shall hold a dead babe and no open graves swallow up our loved ones. Outgrow worship? Yes, when the splendors of the midnight sky shall cease to awe and the evening glories shall no

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longer thrill with the ecstacy of delight. Outgrow worship? Yes, when the mysteries of our own being are all explained and the treachery of a friend shall cause no heartache. Worship outgrown? Yes, when the agony in Gethsemane shall seem trite and commonplace and the victory on the Cross shall lose its pathos. Until then the Church of Tomorrow in its public worship will face an undying need and an imperative task.

To the scientist who said that he felt more worshipful in looking through his microscope than in reading the prayer-book in church little need be said except to remind him that soon or late he will face problems in his own life which the spirit of the prayer-book will do more to solve than any disclosure of his microscope. Ordinary laboratory research work does not brace the will or reinforce the moral law like the simplest act of worship which imparts the consciousness of the presence of God.

To the minister who remarked that it was good to escape from the church filled with praying women and be at home with God in the country let it be said that mere delight in unmoral natural beauty never educated a saint or produced a hero. The most miserable specimen of human being is more than stump or rock. The song of the bird is no substitute

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for "Nearer My God to Thee." A sunset does not have the ethical tonic of a glorious Madonna. The tree will not shame man out of sin like an inspired preacher. Dr. Bellows was not prepared for his humanitarian work by spending his Sundays in the Middlesex Fells, but in walking six miles to hear Channing. The best assurance that the young man will be honest in the bank is not that he spend the Sabbath in a camp or on a yacht, but rather in the fact that he is engaged in the service of religion at church. The Puritan conscience, so much needed today, did not come out of mere idle pleasure seeking, but out of spiritual disciplines provided by piety.

Just because worship goes so deep and sweeps so wide a circle, it is of greatest importance in the religious training of the young. Let us not forget or underestimate the value of truth, or instruction, or correct belief. But what most of all makes the church dear and sacred to people, and especially to young people, is its worship. The most precious spots are not those where the mind has discovered a fact, but where the heart has been thrilled by a mighty emotion: where love first awoke; where duty called to heroism; where the presence of God was felt as a commanding revelation. These are the shrines of life. The cords that bind the young not only to the

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church, but to the ideals of a noble life, are not the iron bands of doctrine, broad or narrow, but the mystic threads of devotion. The place where they worship, where the heart finds its overflow of wonder, hope, and joy — this becomes sacred; and this sanctity will attract and command when dogmas fade and beliefs change.

The Protestant churches have been losing hold of the rising generation largely because the children, attending only the Sunday-school, do not worship in the church. No powerful associations are early built up, touching the life at its center and holding the heart like anchor chains to the church as an institution, loved and revered. So that, when children outgrow the Sunday-school, no affectionate interest in pulpit and pew exists to bind the young to religion. To hold and help people, particularly young people, during the trying period of theological reconstruction that is upon us, while old beliefs are being painfully surrendered and the new truths are being slowly organized into life, nothing is more important than that the church give most careful attention to its worship. This is both the way of wise policy and also the way of largest helpfulness. For only by the grace and power of devotion can multitudes be guided through this transition and kept within the realm of vital piety.

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The worshipful spirit, pervading the whole church, is obviously fundamental to the conduct of public worship. It must fill pulpit and pews, organist and singers, alike at the very beginning of the service. It is not a flame to be slowly kindled; it must already burn in the breasts of those who assemble. The conductor of an orchestra is able to conduct the musicians before him because they are already trained and their instruments are in tune. He would face an impossible task if he had to wait for them to learn their parts and tune their instruments after he mounted his stand. So, if we are to have congregational worship worthy the name, the congregation must be religiously in tune when the organ starts. Also, the people must be present at the beginning of service like the members of the orchestra. The Quaker meeting is deeply impressive because these reverent Friends began to worship before they left home. It is impressive because they are deeply impressed. The mosque is a place of most profound solemnity because each Moslem there, absolutely indifferent to everything else, is intent on his own devotions.

If the spirit of worship is to dominate the church service, and this is what is necessary, the devout heart must be brought to church by the parishioner as well as the preacher, by

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the soloist as well as the congregation. You do not go to your friend's house with the branch of a rose bush and ask him to hold it until it blossoms: you carry to him the open rose. So likewise men and women must go to the church: with the soul already blossoming in wonder and trust. Let people attend church with a vital enthusiasm for the purpose of the day as great as the ambition which they have as they go to their office or shop on Monday morning — all alive on Sunday with reverence as they are alive on weekdays with business interest and activity.

The sympathetic audience helps the minister preach. He can do but little without that supporting sympathy. So too the minister can only imperfectly pray in the presence of a thoughtless, restless, irreverent crowd. A singer or sexton reading a newspaper in the choir loft is a discourtesy and a desecration not to be tolerated for a moment, though seen only by the preacher. Imagine Liszt or Remenyi trying to play in the midst of a rabble! The public prayer of the minister ascends no higher toward heaven than it is pushed by the devout hearts of his people. The minister cannot conduct public worship unless the people are worshipful. In attitude, manner, expression they must show that they are worshiping. As the minister goes into the pulpit with heart

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and mind aglow with devotion, so the people must carry into the pews the spirit of reverence. Not there as spectators, but there as participants; not there to be dragged into devout attitudes, but there as actual worshipers; not there to be convinced that God is, but there because they feel his presence; not there in a spirit of curiosity to be entertained, but there in a devout mood to be led in prayer and praise.

The methods for the expression and cultivation of reverence are numerous, the forms for the conduct of public worship may vary, but a few things are certainly primary and essential. (1) Simplicity and catholicity are obviously necessary: simplicity in setting and catholicity of sentiment. A church edifice, contrary to the common speech and general custom, should never be profusely decorated. Its color scheme should be in neutral and harmonious shades. When many brilliant hues are laid on, we have "the painted squaw" of Lowell's contemptuous line. The eye should not be distracted by mottoes and memorials. The light should be soft and sedative, without being somber. In many churches the general spirit of the service is offensively frivolous or depressingly sad. Worship ought to be jubilant but not trivial. The aspirations that come to expression in prayer and praise should be those that are

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central in human life, those common to the general experiences of mankind.

(2) The conduct of public worship must have dignity and impressiveness. It must be orderly, felicitous, commanding. Through everything must run an evident sense of the greatness of the occasion. A lounging, fussy, awkward, uncouth man in the pulpit; inattentive, whispering, restless, staring people in the pew: these are an abomination unto the Lord. Of all bad manners, bad church manners are the worst. The language of minister, ritual, and music ought certainly to be chaste, direct, noble: a fit symbolism of the sublime feelings of the soul when engaged in contemplation of such exalted themes as duty, immortality, God. There must be no doubtful disputation: affirmation must be absolute. The defect of American worship is, too often, its light and secular air, its colloquial and sociable mannerisms, as though God were a chance acquaintance to be patronized.

(3) The greatest difficulty is to combine freshness and familiarity in the conduct of public worship, so that formality may be avoided on the one hand and mere flatness on the other. We need to wed together the force of habit and the power of originality. The great passages in Scripture, the noblest hymns and anthems — ripened out of the world's

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richest experiences — become more and more precious by frequent use: association continually enriches them until they are expressive and helpful beyond description. Here is the benefit of an established ritual, and this element ought to find a place somewhere in every service of worship. But besides this, there ought to be opportunity for variety, originality, and spontaneity: an open door through which the immanent God may report himself, an open oracle through which the living soul may phrase its passing aspiration and speak its sense of present need. The heart of man ought not to be shut up in formulas, however venerable and sublime. It should have a chance to cry aloud out of the depth of its sorrow or gladness or contrition in a language prompted by the experience of the moment.

But after all, the matter of supreme importance is not whether forms be many or few, the ritual simple or elaborate, but whether the minister in the pulpit and the people in the pews are deeply in earnest. If reverence is abundant, if God and man are actually loved, if the sweet and tender things of life are really felt, there will be beautiful and helpful worship, as sure as a clear sky and a balmy air make a perfect June day.

Surely there is no reason why churches of broad and modern faith should be cold and

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unattractive in their services of worship. In fact, there is every reason for just the opposite. Where should the beauty of holiness be more beautiful than in a church that believes in the immanent God as a Father of infinite Love? Where should worship be more tender, warm, and catholic than in a church that affirms the divinity of man and the brotherhood of men? And where should reverence glow with a clearer and brighter radiance than in a church which accepts the whole universe as the temple of the living God, traces providence in the widest sweep of history, and honors every man as the immortal child of the common Father?

Let us now briefly consider the duties of the minister as the leader of the congregation engaged in public worship. He here stands in line with the ancient priest, but with this profound and radical distinction: the ancient priest offered material sacrifice for the propitiation of the Almighty. The modern minister is the oracle of devout and thankful hearts in search for spiritual perfection. No modern man thinks of worship as a means of flattery, by which the favor of God is purchased. The ancient priest was a sacerdotal intercessor, clothed, it was supposed, with supernatural sanctity and empowered to mediate and absolve. The modern minister, dwelling in a universe of law and order through which a fatherly Love

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operates, assumes no superhuman functions and claims no mystical powers: he is simply leader and representative of a company of worshiping souls.

Obviously modern worship in its best estate, stripped of fear and selfishness — the parents of superstition — is not sacrificial offering nor intercessory pleading, but the glad, spontaneous outpouring of human hearts in expression of thanks and in yearning for communion with God. It is not a transgressor's plea for acquittal at a distant throne, but the personal and domestic gratitude of a child in the divine family of God — the devout aspiration to be at peace with the paternal Love and share in the blessings of the Father's house.

In acting as the leader of congregational worship the minister of today is in no sense engaged in a vicarious, mediatorial, or intercessory office. He does not perform worship as the substitute of his people; he is their helper in their devotions. And these devotions are not the efforts of fear to appease the wrath of heaven; they are the unselfish expression of loving reverence and devout aspiration. He does not stand between God and men, distributing the divine favors to those who do his bidding; he gives expression to common hopes and trusts that are the natural gestures of love and gratitude and humility. He does

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not act as general attorney for a lot of criminals who are seeking royal clemency; he is the public interpreter of private feelings, uttering in fit phrase the great emotions that throng the silences of the breasts of earnest religious men and women.

A man may stand in the pulpit and yet he may not really lead the worship of the people before him. He can only do this as he is himself an actual worshiper. He must even be more than worshipful: the reverence, trust, and yearning to which he gives expression must represent the congregation. His thoughts and feelings must be in touch with the minds and hearts of the company present. To be a leader of congregational worship he must be in perfect sympathy with the lives for which he speaks.

But more than this: the minister cannot lead in worship unless there is a worshipful congregation willing to be led. He cannot represent a devotion which does not exist. He cannot, as has already been stated, give public expression to private reverence if the individuals present have no reverent emotions. The men and women in the pew must be at worship, full of religious sentiment and responsive to the leadership of the spirit. A congregation touched with the sense of awe and mystery, moved by spiritual impulses toward a common sentiment of devotion, anxious to

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have its flaming desires expressed — this co-operation of the people is necessary to make public worship a vital and impressive reality.

Congregational worship implies something greater and grander than any temple service ever performed, no matter how spacious the architecture, artistic the liturgy, or gorgeous the ceremonials. In the temple we find worship dramatised with wonderful art and made esthetically effective, but the people are more or less mere spectators. Congregational worship, on the other hand, starts from a different interpretation of the universe; it proceeds by personal and spiritual processes to give expression to a different quality of religious life. Those present are not spectators but participants; not beggars for heavenly favors but seekers for the heavenly life. The worship is not an artistic drama but a living efflorescence of the human spirit. It is not a performance but an experience — richer, deeper, more ethical, more personal than any other form of religious service.

But to reach this "dear togetherness" in divine things; to have congregational worship in all its beauty, power, and glory; to experience the palpable presence of the Infinite impinging on the finite, pulpit and pew must glow *alike* with wonder, trust, and love. Deep devotion must fill the place as a corporate life into

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which all are baptized and of which all partake, a vital sense of the supreme majesty of God and a profound realization of the sublime meaning of human life. Then we have "common prayer," in which he who leads and they who are led are one in a spiritual communion, which sets all in a large place and opens an outlook upon life of boundless sweep and innumerable splendors.

Public worship — what does it mean? It means an escape from the petty things of the day and entrance into the presence of the sublime verities of eternity. An escape from the irritation and depression of the moment and entrance into the serenity and uplift of a spiritual experience. An escape from the discords of our own selfishness and entrance into the service and peace of a great love.

Public worship means being at home in a divine world ruled by justice and mercy, claiming our immortal inheritance in the family of saints and communing with all the pure spirits made perfect through suffering. Public worship means the light of a day whose sun never sets, the music of a choir invisible whose song never wearies, the shelter of a tender providence that never fails. Public worship means a consciousness of the mystery of life that solemnizes and exalts the duties of the hour; a thrill of joy indescribable; a companionship

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with God the Father that purifies, gladdens, and ennobles.

In worship we shed the sordid and the selfish, while we grow as souls into the realization of our divine sonship. The worshiping heart puts on an armor that protects from the shafts of every enemy; it overflows with gracious and heroic motives that equip for every service; it luxuriates in an ecstacy of delight that is pure blessedness. To worship is to appropriate the divine bounty and take our place, consciously and gladly, in the family of God.

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V. ITS PULPIT: THE VOICE OF THE MORAL IDEAL

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TOPICS

THE EVOLUTION OF THE PULPIT — ISRAEL AT SCHOOL IN BABYLON — THE SYNAGOGUE AS THE HOME OF PROPHECY — THE OLD METHOD: PRIEST AND SACRIFICE — THE NEW: AN EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION OF RELIGION — A THRONE OF POWER IN THE CONGREGATION — PREACHING THE ART OF PERSUASION — IS THE MORAL INFLUENCE OF PULPITS DECLINING? — FORCES HOSTILE TO THE PREACHER — A WORKING THEORY IN ETHICS — MORAL LIFE IMPLIES MORAL UNIVERSE — SPIRITUAL HELPS FROM HISTORY — SERMONS MUST REVEAL MORAL LAW — THE PREACHER'S USE OF TRUTH FOR LIFE — THE NEEDED "SOCIAL" CONSCIENCE — SOUNDING THE KEYNOTE OF THE GOSPEL — WHAT THAT EVANGEL REALLY IS — CHRISTIANITY MORE THAN A MORAL IDEAL — THE EDUCATING PERSONALITY OF JESUS — DISCIPLESHIP MORE THAN INSTRUCTION — THE INCOMPARABLE MINISTRY OF JESUS — THE WORLD-EXPERIENCE DECISIVE.

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V. ITS PULPIT: THE VOICE OF THE MORAL IDEAL

THE history of the evolution of the Christian pulpit reveals its importance and demonstrates its perpetuity. A wide survey of the world some five hundred years before Christ shows us innumerable altars and temples. These altars were loaded with profuse and infinitely varied offerings, and in these temples elaborate services were constantly performed in honor of some deity. Everywhere the object sought was access to God by sacrifice, not the training of man in spiritual life. The propitiation of a divinity, not the perfection of the individual. The demand of God was not interpreted in terms of reverence and righteousness, but rather by the methods of a despot's court: "Do this, not for your own good, but for my pleasure."

The worship of God was a matter of etiquette, modeled after the customs of an oriental court: a suppliant's approach to royalty to appease wrath or secure favor. The altar was a veritable table where the life of the unseen king was nourished by the choice gifts of his subjects, and the temple, not for the development of human life, but a royal residence

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for a divinity. Everywhere religious activities were exclusively sacrificial: the simple good of men as human beings nowhere considered, but the goodwill of a jealous and despotic god or goddess always the sole aim.

Throughout that ancient world there were teachers of philosophy with bands of disciples, but their work was academic rather than religious. There were isolated prophets of the moral ideal, denouncing sin and pleading for righteousness, but their labors were intermittent and independent of religious sanction. There were mystic cults in whose symbols and rituals, spiritual truths and ethical obligations were impressively blended, but no preacher set apart to expound the moral law in the name of God and for the good of man What the world then had was a vast amount of sacrificial machinery, all operated for the propitiation of some deity. What the world then lacked and needed was a *pulpit* with a preacher to proclaim the moral ideal under the most impressive associations of religion and for the better conduct of human life.

It was given to the Hebrews in exile to supply this need. The prophets of the eighth century, that noble band from Amos to Isaiah, had delivered a sublime message, which is still vital with mighty spiritual power, but they did not occupy a pulpit; their work was not an integral

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part of religious instruction, given regularly to a congregation. But while Israel was at school in Babylon, the London of antiquity, a peculiar combination of providential conditions evolved the pulpit.

The important facts which we need to bear in mind in order to understand its evolution, a veritable turning-point in the religious history of the human race, are these:

(1) A selected stock, the superior families of the Hebrew nation, like the Pilgrim Fathers, were transported to the neighborhood of Babylon, and, located in its vicinity as colonists, they took root in the richest soil in that ancient world. Out of such a replanting great things must surely come. Here was a new combination of inheritance and environment, which inevitably led to a fruitful experiment in religion. People having in themselves not only a supreme genius for religion, but also the great seed-truth of the prophetic message respecting ethical monotheism, when set down in the most highly civilized spot on the earth would naturally bear a remarkable spiritual harvest.

(2) It is not difficult to understand the enriching processes which operated in the lives of these Hebrew exiles: they were stimulated by their surroundings like the student in a foreign university or like a traveler in a distant land; chastened by the remembered denuncia-

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tions of the old prophets, as the parental reproof takes hold of the boy when alone in the great city; cured for all time of idolatry and polytheism by an inevitable reaction against the repulsive rites of their neighbors, as the young man who casually drinks is often driven to abstinence by his disgust at metropolitan debaucheries. No wonder that they came out of this race-training the strictest Puritans the world has ever seen.

(3) Two other closely related influences played upon them and tended to spiritualize their religious ideals. Detached from their tribal relations and every man thrown upon his own responsibility, the sense of individual moral obligation was developed to an unusual degree. Conscience as a personal authority, representing the will of God, now came into great prominence. The soul began to face its duty and destiny, not as a corporate but as a solitary problem: What must *I* do to be saved? This training reacted powerfully in behalf of moral progress, giving not only a fresh sense of responsibility, but a new feeling of worth to the individual.

The other acquisition of great importance was the new interpretation of the ministry of suffering, which came to expression in the Later Isaiah in those wonderful descriptions of the "Suffering Servant." This doctrine added to

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life a new ideal and motive, the conquest of the world by suffering; it disciplined Israel and trained its people to endure numberless hardships; it prepared the way for Jesus of Nazareth; and it remains even today one of the most precious elements of our common Christianity.

(4) This chastened and expanding spiritual life of the Hebrew exiles, not able to find expression in a temple service (for the holy Zion was far away and the temple of Jehovah formerly in existence there was now in ruins) had to make for itself new channels in which to flow. Hence arose the neighborhood meeting, with reading of the great words of their prophets, with spontaneous prayers, and a *pulpit* upraised in the midst of the little congregation for the wise leader who felt moved by the spirit to declare the word of the Lord. These spiritual and social necessities created and ordained the first true preachers, giving voice to the ethical ideal in an educational administration of religion.

Thus it came about that the Jews in returning to the home of their ancestors carried with them the synagogue, a spiritual, educational, congregational form of religious service. This new method marks a radical revolution in the religious life of the human race; it presented to the world its greatest institution for the

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making of character. Sacrifices ceased (so far as the synagogue was concerned) and the superstitions connected with them withered and died. Worship became common prayer and praise: an outpouring of the heart rather than the lifting up of bloody hands. Instead of an assemblage of spectators merely witnessing mystic rites, we have here a religious community, a congregation, under the instruction of a preacher in a pulpit. Religious service took on the form of ethical training, the object of which was not so much the propitiation of God as the perfection of man. Out of the synagogue came Jesus; and the synagogue, enriched and emancipated by the life and gospel of Jesus, gave place to the Christian Church, the object of whose pulpit is to make the moral ideal effective in human life through discipleship.

The pulpit is, therefore, a throne of power upraised in the congregation for its teacher and leader in spiritual things: a communal oracle where a prophetic soul may speak out of its reason and conscience to the hearts of men; an open sphere of growing experience where a free man may publish the ever-expanding word of God; a place around which teachable minds assemble for instruction in righteousness and inspiration to holiness.

The contrasts between pulpit and altar are

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many and instructive. In one stands a prophet with a message from God to men; at the other officiates a priest with an offering from men to God. The method of the former is edification by means of a sermon; the method of the latter is propitiation of God by means of a sacrifice. The one uses reason and aims at righteousness among men; the other uses a ritual and seeks to appease God's wrath. The one appeals to the conscience of a congregation by his eloquence; the other strives to present his followers by processes of ceremonial etiquette to the favorable consideration of an offended deity. The one pleads in the name of truth and endeavors to bring sinners to repentance; the other claims to possess the infallible authority of God and assumes to exercise mystical power to absolve from sin. The one stands for Christian nurture; the other for sacramental sanctity. The finished product of the one is a noble character vital with the spirit of Jesus; the ambition of the other is realized when a troubled heart is set free from the fear of an angry God.

This brief survey of the evolution of the pulpit reveals its importance and demonstrates its permanence. We see how it arose and we appreciate its immense contributions to human progress. It is here and it is here to stay. Wherever it is established the march of civilization follows. It represents the art of spiritual

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persuasion, moving men to better life; and this is the highest form, not only of the persuasive art, but of all human endeavor. All other arts are but tributaries to character-building, and the voice of the moral ideal sounding from the pulpit outranks all other educational agencies in this single particular.

The lawyer persuades judge and jury in order to win a verdict; the minister persuades the soul in order to make a nobler man. The politician persuades the crowd to elect a candidate; the minister persuades the heart to repentance in order to save an immortal child of God. The reformer persuades the people to stop a civic or social wrong; the minister persuades the congregation to establish the kingdom of God. The lecturer entertains; the preacher converts. The teacher makes men wise; the preacher makes them righteous. The book provides entertainment; the preacher leads to newness of life.

The man in the pulpit appeals to conscience in the name of God for the good of others and with reference to immortality. The art of persuasion here operative has a wider field and a higher aim than any other display of eloquence or instruction. All facts are his servants, but they must serve one object — that which created and still maintains the pulpit: the perfection of man as a child of God. The test

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of every sermon, from whatever fields its flowers of speech or fruits of wisdom may have been gathered, must be found in the answer to the one question: Have you persuaded men to forsake sin and live in the spirit of Jesus? The preacher may have said nothing new, but a familiar truth, uttered by another man with uncommon earnestness from a pulpit with all the uplifting associations of the church of God, acquires new power and fresh authority. The man and the occasion make it productive of righteousness, the sole object of preaching.

The preacher, then, is the voice of the moral ideal, the best in a noble soul pleading with others to live better. And who can estimate the value to any community of such inspiring prophecy? His words fall on shadowed lives and the light shines again upon their pathway. They fall on wavering wills and temptations are resisted. They fall on doubting minds and courage revives. They fall on wayward souls and penitence faces the sinner homeward. From the pulpit come the signals which show where the switches on the highway of life are open and where the track is clear. The message of the pulpit opens horizons of life broader than shop or market, furnishing ideals and motives indispensable for every occupation and occasion. It reveals the conduct-values of truths which science discovers, but does not

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apply to life. The sermon prepares the young for eternal life, where the school often only prepares them to earn a livelihood.

The true preacher performs, by his persuasions in behalf of righteousness, a holy office to mankind incomparable in excellence. It is a prime necessity to all men. There are, indeed, some persons among us who challenge this statement, contending that the sermon has had its day and that the pulpit will soon be a thing of the past. Many earnest young men are even now telling us that they want *to do something* for humanity, and that mere preaching must give place to philanthropy. Social service, not sermon making, appeals powerfully to certain young hearts in these days. They tell us that preaching seems very unsatisfactory to them because it does not produce definite results, and they want to lay hold of something concrete and tangible.

Let us face the question for a moment: Will the philanthropist supplant the preacher, the social settlement crowd aside the church, and sanitation regenerate the world where the sermon has failed? Certainly *to do something practical* for mankind is a most praiseworthy ambition. But the experience of nearly a hundred generations in many lands and with thousands of millions of people does not show that the pulpit has been powerless or imprac-

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tical. The nature of the modern man and the problems of modern society are not so radically different from those in the past as to discredit methods approved by the centuries. One fact of very great significance needs to be clearly recognized in this connection. The humanitarian impulses which operate in the hearts of those who today turn from pulpit to philanthropy are, in the main, the products of Christian nurture — the survivals of religious training received in home and church.

And more significant (and really alarming too!) is this other fact, that the children of those who make this change and bring serious charges against the pulpit do not, as a rule, continue in humanitarian work, but plunge first into business affairs and then into frivolous pleasures! The new quality of human life, without definite religious convictions and trainings, does not have sufficient spiritual effectiveness to maintain even works for social service! The heart left without spiritual culture soon loses its zeal for humanity, as the abandoned field soon has no harvest of grain.

No criticism should be made against humanitarian works by the defender of the pulpit. They are just what the pulpit ought to inspire people to undertake. There is no reason why any antagonism should exist between social services and church activities. The problem

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is simply one of essential sequence and relative value. All that needs to be insisted upon here is that there is no reason why any lover of humanity should leave the pulpit in order to do a supremely important work for society: a work more needed and fundamental than any purely philanthropic work can possibly be, because it deals with the deepest roots of life.

When the church clothes the soul with the beauty of holiness it surely performs a service as practical as distributing second-hand garments to cover the bodies of the poor. To give the will of a boy power to resist temptation is to do something for him quite as valuable as to train his hand to drive a nail straight. To send young men into the world with larger moral worth is as important as to prepare them to earn larger wages. To bring the water of life from the deep springs of piety in order to cleanse and refresh the hearts of men and women is quite as important as to provide pure water for drinking purposes. In the family, at the ballot box, and on the market, heart-craft contributes elements more valuable than those produced by hand-craft. Many a man is probably better fitted for philanthropic than for distinctly religious work, and if not profoundly interested in religion, let him go where his ambition directs. But anyone who leaves the pulpit for social service, thinking

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that he is thereby making a change from a fruitless to an important ministry of helpfulness, is surely acting under a very serious misapprehension. The preacher, in persuading men to rejoice in the law of the Lord and follow Jesus of Nazareth, makes a supreme contribution to civilization.

To persuade men to live the good life is, then, the sole and sufficient task of the pulpit. All doctrines must be made means to this supreme end. All tributary rites must be tested by fruitfulness in this direction. When people in general have a clearer understanding of this matter, they will more fully appreciate the worth of the church and the importance of the preacher. And when ministers themselves more fully realize the true nature of their specific function among the world's activities, they will be saved from both unseemly sensationalism and unfruitful dogmatism, while they will thereby enter into new spiritual power. Let the preacher magnify his office, for there is no substitute for the pulpit in which he stands; and if successful in his ministry there, he will feed the roots of human life more effectively than any other agency, though we place a high estimate upon school and home.

The moral authority of the pulpit presents an important theme for discussion. There is a widespread impression that the minister of

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religion can no longer speak with any authority respecting matters of human conduct. An increasing number of people, many of them intelligent and earnest, have come to look upon the church as a social convenience, not as a guide to conscience. It is certain that the pulpit has temporarily lost much of its power to influence conduct and the church much of its ability to discipline men and women. Persons vexed with the perplexing ethical problems of life care, in these days, very little for what the preacher may say, while sinners seldom stand in awe of ecclesiastical judgments.

The scientist is often impatient with the teacher of religion, saying: "A man who is ignorant of physics and biology must not presume to tell me what my duty is. He may amuse my wife and children with his fairy tales, but let him not attempt to dictate to me respecting my conduct." And yet a man may be ignorant of biology and still have a moral sense superior to that of the scientist!

The capitalist, when the churchman approaches, feels in his pocket for a contribution, in much the same spirit as he treats any needy mendicant; or at best, his attitude is similar to that assumed toward the representative of some worthy charity: a somewhat troublesome visitor to be gotten rid of as quickly as possible, without undue discourtesy!

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He would not admit for a moment, whatever he may conventionally profess, that his clerical suppliant has any right to dictate to him respecting his business policies. In his very heart of hearts he probably looks upon the Ten Commandments as a mere remnant of outgrown folk-lore and upon the Golden Rule as presenting an impracticable idcal.

The profoundly earnest socialist, or Labor Union leader, all on fire with a consciousness of the wrongs of the poor, savagely calls the minister to the judgment bar of the world and demands why, if he has any authority, the church allows gigantic evils to fill the land: "If religion is worth anything why not speak a word of power that will make the representatives of predatory wealth tremble and repent? If of any use, why does not the pulpit put a ban upon violators of all laws, human and divine?" This man, with a sense of outraged justice, begins to hate the church as too complacent to deserve respect and its minister as too weak to deserve a moment's attention.

All this is too well known to need further description. The situation is exceedingly serious and these questions demand careful attention, though all of them cannot be here discussed. What has brought about this popular contempt of the moral authority of the church? Is this indifference to religion likely to con-

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tinue? Is there any possibility that ministers may regain their ability to influence human life profoundly in matters of moral conduct? Is it desirable that religion should reenter human life as a disciplinary power?

The popular tendency to ignore the moral authority of the pulpit is due to a variety of influences, and chief among them are these:

(1) In the first place the church is itself somewhat to blame for this unfortunate situation. Ministers have too long made morality dependent upon dogma. They have too often said: If the creed or text is untrue, then there is no ground for morality and no certainty of heaven. Not unnaturally, some men and women of the rising generation, in discovering errors in creed and Scripture, have taken the preacher at his word and concluded that all the commands of religion are equally false and that moral obligation, as formerly represented by the church, is a fading superstition. The prevention of such unfortunate results must be found in a more rational policy in the pulpit. The cause of morality ought never to be staked on the infallibility of any text or dogma. The preacher who strives to coerce the reason of mankind in this way hastens the day of his own destruction.

(2) The pulpit suffers from the degrading commercialism which has infected every depart-

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ment of human life. The passion for ease and luxury has, with many people, temporarily overthrown the old ethical standards and pulled down into the dust the ancient ideals. The selfish ear refuses to listen to all oracles and entreaties in behalf of the Moral Ideal. Very many people have become impatient of exhortation, indifferent to sanctities, and too much devoted to mere pleasure to respect any call to prayer or penitence. And as a result the voice of the preacher is unheeded.

(3) This loss of moral authority on the part of the pulpit is part of a larger movement. It is one of the incidents of the overthrow of all orthodoxies. A popular impression has grown up that there is no real authority anywhere. Every belief is challenged. Every institution is called to justify its existence. All sanctities are suspected. All laws and customs are on trial. Party loyalty wanes; reverence for age vanishes; respect for marriage vows lessens. Sin and crime are, we are told, only diseases. Restraint is odious and responsibility a pious fiction. The church at present is the victim of certain conditions that threaten the very bases of civilization itself.

(4) The rapid progress of science has, for the time being, done much to lessen the moral authority of the pulpit, not simply by discrediting some parts of the preacher's message,

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but by making many persons feel that there is no warrant for morality in the nature of things. Some scientists have contributed to this condition by boldly teaching that the universe is unmoral; others, like Herbert Spencer, by so interpreting conscience as to reduce it to the level of merely physical functions; while others have helped the movement not so much by direct teaching as by inference and implication. The glory of the many discoveries in the physical world have temporarily seemed, to many people, to discredit all ancient sanctities, because so impressive and revolutionary. Nothing ancient seems valuable.

But the situation, though alarming, is not hopeless. Much may be done by the preacher of insight and earnestness to regain for the pulpit at least much of the real moral authority which it once had, but which it has temporarily lost. And the moral authority needed, we must remember, is not despotic dictation effacing the private conscience, but vital inspiration; not infallible certainty overriding the individual reason, but power of personal influence.

Certainly much needs to be done by the Church of Tomorrow along this line if human progress is to continue and human happiness is to abound. Several things are evident. Religion must shed its dogmatism and confine

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itself to a more rational appeal to human experience. The preacher may easily show that Criticism has not destroyed the true moral authority of the Bible, which still remains a mighty fountain of inspiration. He can make a new use of Scripture more productive of ethical results than the old, and so handle its great texts as divine facts which science itself must respect. The pulpit may still command if it link itself with the commanding influences of the time and use the resources at hand which make for righteousness.

I. Of the two principal methods of approach toward the solution of this problem, one is the reinforcement of the ethical implications of science itself, when all the human facts are rightly understood. A truer interpretation will make plain not only the everlasting foundations of religion, but also the greater moral authority in these facts themselves. A generation ago the new discoveries swept so many old notions away, before the spiritual meaning of the new facts was seen, that many despaired of religion. And yet the new universe that emerges through discovery is in reality more conducive to religious feeling, provided its facts are properly presented. So also the doctrine of evolution seemed at first to rob conscience of all authority, and men exclaimed, "The good fades into a large selfishness; the law of

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righteousness becomes a mere instinct of race preservation."

But, even if we accept the ethics of evolution as often stated, no such dire result need follow. If a conscience exists in animals, then we simply ingrain morality more deeply into the very texture of nature itself. If our ethical judgments are the conclusion of experience, then the universe must be moral to make our contact with it moralizing. If acts are right because beneficial, then we must have a universe good at heart to make this possible. If the sense of obligation is evolved, it is here, and the slow rate of its making is no menace to its authority. Music is no less divine, however the ear was opened to hear.

Whether implanted or evolved, finding the right in quality or consequence, conscience represents and reports a like power in the universe. A defective or abnormal moral sense is no more a disproof of absolute justice than is blindness proof that there is no light. When all the facts which go along with the doctrine of evolution are in hand and fully interpreted, what dawns upon us is the comforting truth that the universe is more moral than we thought, the right has a deeper root, conscience a higher throne. Translating ourselves upward, we also see that the sense of moral obligation still descends to us from the heights of Primal

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Being. And when we say this is a moral universe, we thereby affirm that it is a temple of holiness and leads in all the essentials of religion. And just this the Church of Tomorrow must make clear and commanding to the average man in the street, who, too often, at present feels that conscience is little more than a by-product of the survival of the fittest!

Moreover, we see that no crisis in morals will come even from the most vagrant or vicious theory in ethics, however unfortunate it may be. Action waits not on theory. Character unfolds independently of speculations. Men in their conduct contradict their beliefs. No strange theory in optics will keep us from using our eyes. No false ethical doctrines will destroy the pitying heart or the heroic hand. Conscience is here, with the pressure of the universe behind it. It leads the millions, who have no theories, in divine ways. It will still rule with undiminished power those who make theories about it that cut its root and deny its authority. It works whether we have a working theory about it or not.

A crisis in morals will never come from the erroneous views respecting ethics locked up in scholastic books. It comes rather from corrupting luxuries, from undisciplined wealth, from unsanctified power, from wayward wills.

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But if we keep the windows open heavenward, the eye intent on the truth, the hand free to gather skill and strength from a large experience, every impending crisis will give place to a larger triumph of righteousness. But the Church of Tomorrow must bestir itself and new power must come into its pulpit if this result, much to be desired, shall soon arrive.

II. The pulpit may do much to reestablish its moral authority by a skilful appeal to the facts of human history. In both the life of the individual and the corporate life of the community the outcome of actions is often diviner than the intent. The fruitage of the Crusades was other and grander than the purpose of the noblest crusader. The historic result of Luther's heroism was larger and far better than what he imagined it would be. The moral product of the abolition agitation was many fold greater than planned or expected. The temperance advocate does not see his precise plan adopted, but his advocacy leads on to a vaster good than that for which he speaks. What finally passes into the permanent life of the nation is something better than what the partisan motive had in view. In our single lives we strive to do a certain good, but Providence lifts the result to an ampler field and makes it an infinite best. We start out some morning to bless a needy soul, but before

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night the blessing has circled and adorned our horizon.

In popular sayings that are the unconscious coinage of the truth of things we have clear demonstration of the same fact. It is said, "He builded better than he knew." But how could this be were there not a supervising architect more moral than the human workman? It is also said, "God makes the wrath of man praise him." And how so? Because Providence is fundamentally good; so that by the influence of a divine environment the selfish discord is changed into the music of love.

And what does all this make clear as noonday? It proves, not only that humanity is fundamentally moral, but that the Power without him, shaping these results, is more moral than man is. The moral intent could not reach such fruitage except in a system sympathetic with it. The outcome could not outrun the intent were there not outside human nature "a Power not ourselves that makes for righteousness." The throne of conscience is in our breast because a moral majesty is enthroned everywhere of which it is the pendant. Amidst all the wrong that apparently goes unpunished, amidst all the violent outrages against moral feeling, and amidst all gross sensuality, still, as we look far along the ages, we see a decided gain for morality —

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and what is more, a gain that outruns the plan and purpose of the actors in the drama, showing that some master artist above the web of human affairs is weaving them in patterns of moral law and purpose.

But what has this to do with the work of the pulpit? Much every way. It proves that moral quality inheres in the universal Nature from which we spring. It proves that moral power resides and presides in that system outside ourselves of which we are parts and products. It proves that moral law, instead of being created by our social relations, reveals itself in and through them — not present because two or three are gathered together, but brought within each individual as a part of his spiritual furnishing as a man, which descends to him out of that infinite Life in whom we live, move, and have our being. The fact that in human affairs the moral outcome outruns the intent witnesses the operation outside ourselves of an ethical principle or potency to which we trace that within us which declares, "I ought."

The fruit of my deed is, then, better than I planned, because ripened by a sunshine that fills the world, and the moral purpose within me that prompted the effort is one with the moral principle without that carried it to unexpected perfection. The conscience within me

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is part of that moral life without me which takes up my deed and makes of it a larger good. Moral capacity is in me because in the parental Life from which I sprang. It flowed over when I began to be — an original constituent of my individuality because an essential constituent of absolute Being. A sense of right stirs within my soul because in the grain of that soul-stuff from which I am evolved. To put it religiously, conscience is in the son because first in the Father. And our trust in individual and national education is trust in the essential rightness of things. Our saying, "He will learn by experience to be a better man," is ample evidence that ethical power surrounds us and reports itself in and through us.

We are able to live a moral life because we live in a moral universe. It is also imperative that we live a moral life because we live in a moral universe. Science demands rationality and the modern mind is intolerant of miracles. What greater absurdity than the assertion that moral life is the product of an ethically dead universe! What more unthinkable miracle than that an unmoral universe should produce a Socrates, a Buddha, and a Jesus!

Man, therefore, has an original moral capacity because the process which individualizes him from the infinite Life carries over into him this constituent of that system from which he

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springs, and which gives the better outcome to his good intent. It does not exist at first as a perfect faculty, giving absolute decisions, but as a nature to be nurtured. And there is a moral product in experience because the agent entering into experience carries an ethical fitness for it, and also because contact with other lives is contact with organized moral power — not unmoral beasts, but moral beings.

The fact that experience does correct my moral judgments, and also develops my moral power, is due, not simply to an observation that runs over the surface of things, but to contact with moral life in others. My conscience is evolved, but from an original germ that grows because it assimilates new life by experience from environing moral feeling. In whatever way heredity may play in its making, what it precipitates in us is an inheritance from God. And conscience in its judgments looks to both quality and consequence. We detect moral features in acts, for we have an ethical sensibility. Deeds have a moral fruitage because we live in a moral system. Experience is moralizing because our environment is stocked with moral power. The sense of obligation springs from an inner oracle, but it is confirmed by a study of the consequences of conduct. General utility is a rough measure of what is right because the ways of the spirit are such

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that the right is beneficial. After all, what is the consequence of an act but the revelation of its quality? What is the utility shown by experience but the declaration of what is fundamental in the universe? Something like this is what the plain man follows as his working theory in ethics, and the best theory is that which really works, under which we work in safety.

In these ways — and the reader will pardon the iteration because of the importance of the subject — the preacher may do much to re-establish the moral authority of the pulpit. There is here a great challenge and a large opportunity for young men of the very highest intellectual ability. There is no other field in which persons of superior mental equipment can make a more needed or more valuable contribution to civilization at the present time. This done, and the church would enter upon a new era of power. This done, and all social evils would be lessened. This done, and private life everywhere would be more wholesome, and public affairs would instantly become more honorable and honest.

In this connection we touch the intellectual task of the pulpit, its administration of truth, a subject which, in its general aspects, has been discussed in treating of The Method of the Church of Tomorrow. It is enough to

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remember here that the preacher is more than a mere instructor imparting facts. He may use facts gathered from any field of human experience or realm of scientific discovery, but he must use them for their spiritual import, for their conduct value, for their religious significance. He uses knowledge in a different way from that of the politician or the lecturer: not so much to enlarge mental vision as to increase moral power; not so much to store the memory as to move the heart; not so much to impart professional skill as to create spiritual ideals. He is the greatest of all teachers, but a teacher of the supreme wisdom of life rather than the art of earning a livelihood.

The pulpit stands for the application of truth to create character. The minister preaches, not to make men wise about books, or markets, or scientific discoveries, but to give them the power and grace of an endless life; not to make scholars, but to save sinners. A misconception at this point leads some ministers into grave blunders. They give admirable lectures, but they never preach. They stand in a pulpit, but turn it into a platform. They lack the spiritual insight and the gift of religious persuasion. They satisfy intellectual curiosity, but they do not make disciples or regenerate hearts.

A similar misconception respecting the function of the pulpit among the people at large

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explains a good deal of popular indifference to the church. Men frequently make the statement that they do not go to church because they do not have any interest in the preacher's dogma, or that they do not care to listen to one who knows less about history and science than they themselves do. And so they shun the church largely on account of a misapprehension of what the supreme purpose of preaching really is. A minister may know few scientific facts, and yet he may be able to teach the great scientist the wisdom of life or impart to the profound scholar a spiritual impulse which will save him from ruin. The final test in preaching does not, then, lie in the new fact imparted, but in the use of any fact to create and ennoble life; in the application of familiar truths for moral improvement — the vital appeal of personal faith from heart to heart; in the actual penetration of persuasive entreaties to will and conscience. When the teacher has set a fact in the mind, like a brick in a wall, he has practically finished his work; but the preacher must plant that fact in the soil of the soul to grow as the seed of a new life. This is the specific work of the pulpit, and the preacher must be judged by what he accomplishes in this line; that is, making the moral ideal felt and obeyed in life.

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Many intellectual giants have, in years past, stood in Christian pulpits. Men of large intellectual endowments are needed there today. Nowhere else is there a louder call for superior ability and nowhere else a wider field of usefulness. But the intellectual ability operative in the pulpit must always aim at religious results. Its office is not to explore new fields, but to vitalize and apply all knowledge. The preacher must go to science to show how deep the rootage of conscience is; to reveal to the scientist himself the spiritual implications of his discoveries; to demonstrate the everlasting foundations of religion, and to turn the conquests of the laboratory into illustrations of spiritual laws and helps to holy living. The preacher, as has already been indicated, must use the facts of human history to make clear and impressive to the popular imagination the mighty sweep of moral purpose through the centuries.

The authority of conscience must evermore be reinforced by appeals to human experience. And above all other documents, the Bible provides inexhaustible and invaluable materials for such purposes. It can never be outgrown because itself the outgrowth of a richly endowed race under the providential trainings of almighty God. Whatever scholarship may decide respecting its origins, it is here as a

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transcendently valuable record of religious experience. However much science may reconstruct our theories of the material universe, it can never invalidate those great heart-truths which shine with unfading light through Scripture and which are of vast importance in the conduct of life. The Bible must, then, ever remain preeminently the text-book of the pulpit. And men are everywhere coming to see that it must be used, not for dogma, but for increase of life.

A great deal is being said today about the need of a "social conscience." The intention of these advocates of a moral regeneration largely by use of economic methods is most praiseworthy, but their philosophy of life has serious limitations. It stops short with such matters as wages, profits, and public utilities. It does not look to the higher and deeper things that are the most powerful and precious in our social order. A "social conscience" to enrich the poor laborer and restrain the greedy capitalist? Yes, by all means! But the need is far greater for a new consciousness of social obligations that men may realize the importance of the proper observance of Sunday, which is one of the most valuable moral assets of civilization. A far greater need of the laborers is not to have a humaner employer, but to understand the value of Christian nurture

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and give themselves to the religious education of their children. It would be better for them to feel the transcendent worth of the church as an institution and give to it their enthusiastic support than simply to enjoy a juster division of profits.

The "social conscience" that we need today is one that does something more than insist upon the more equitable distribution of "things." It must be a moral awakening that shall inspire men to bestir themselves to attend to their religious duties and maintain those spiritual ideals upon which the welfare and stability of society is more dependent than upon industrial conditions. What is needed is a "social conscience" which will arrest the attention of the careless, pleasure-seeking automobilist on Sunday morning and convince him that his conduct is breaking down the safeguards of society and setting an example of indifference to religion which will seriously injure his neighbors and his children. What is needed is a "social conscience" that has in it some faith in God, some love of Jesus, some comprehension of one's obligations to the spiritual factors of civilization. Social justice, in its truest sense, means loyalty to those spiritual verities which are the source and basis of civic righteousness. All this the pulpit of the Church of Tomorrow must make clear and impressive.

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The pulpit must constantly sound the keynote of the gospel of Jesus. This the Church of Tomorrow must do as faithfully as the Church of Yesterday. The power of that gospel to persuade men to forsake sin and live in righteousness is the preacher's chief equipment, and its power is still undiminished. But we must here consider for a moment the question, What is the keynote of the gospel?

The theologians have sometimes claimed that the "keynote" of Jesus' message is faith: belief in him as Messiah, or Son of God. But faith is a word of varied meanings. It may refer to a deep conviction respecting the realities of our spiritual life, belief in the affirmation of the soul about God, Duty, and Immortality; and it may refer to affectionate confidence in a revered personality, such as reverent love for Jesus. In either case, faith represents a gracious attitude and a precious influence. And yet, at best, it is only a fraction of life, and not so much cause as product.

Our faith follows the quality of our heart and the line of our thought, and our belief in the Eternal Goodness springs from the goodness within us. The world's loving reverence for the Master does as much credit to human nature as to him. But as a matter of fact, Jesus did not so much demand faith in himself as life like his own — heart righteousness.

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Moreover, belief in him as Messiah was not assent to dogmas about him, but affectionate appreciation of his spirit. His disciples followed him because his life compelled their love. His gospel did win the faith of men, but its keynote was not mere belief. His plea for love, backed by his divine life, created their faith, which was a spiritual conviction rather than an intellectual conclusion.

There are people today who assert that the keynote of the gospel is service, emphasizing the text, "By their fruits ye shall know them." But just here lies the danger of mere outwardness in religion. It is the peril of putting so much emphasis on works that we forget the sources of conduct. Salvation is not by works, but by the spirit that works within the wheels. We do indeed know men by their fruits, but the fruits are the products of life. Out of deep roots come the fruits. We may not hear too much at present about service, but we do hear too little about the deep sources of spiritual life. If the heart shrivels, the hand will cease to serve. Our worth as servants helping the needy depends upon our wealth of soul.

We are in danger of having more machinery than motive power. The spindle will turn only as the mill pond is full. The most urgent demand is not for service, but for spirituality. A soul fed from on high will certainly bow down

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and lift the lowly. But a generation that has lost faith in God and ceased to love Jesus will not long serve humanity. Serve men? Yes! But the measure of our service will depend upon our manhood. Merely doing errands will not necessarily enlarge the heart, but a large heart will perform manifold errands of mercy. We do grow by serving, if we serve in the right spirit. And it is only religion that gives the right spirit, which comes chiefly from discipleship of Jesus. Jesus imparted life, and abundance of life guarantees service.

We come nearer to the truth when we say that love is the keynote of the gospel. Jesus did indeed assert that love to God and love to man summarize law and prophecy: the duty of man. And so it does. But what is love? It is an expression of "life," which is the larger term and represents the diviner reality. We must remember two things: that there is a great deal in life besides love — justice, truth, beauty, wonder. And, that our love is small or large, noble or ignoble, pure or impure, according to the life out of which it springs. The slaveholder loved his white neighbor, but Garrison also loved the negro as a neighbor. The love of one man for God may be quite unlike that of his friend across the road. In each case the love will follow the quality and content of the soul. The demand of Jesus goes

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even deeper than love: he asks for a great soul. Abundance and purity of life will insure love; then faith in everything good will follow, and efficient service to all in need will also follow.

What then is the keynote of the gospel? It is the plea for "Inner Life." The most comprehensive description of Jesus' ministry is, "I am come that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly." Abundance of Inner Life, and then the weightier matters of the law, justice, mercy, and fidelity, will not be neglected. Abundance of Inner Life, and then all trials and temptations will be overcome; for we can easily march through Gethsemane if our spirit is sufficiently strong, and crosses can easily be borne if the heart is sufficiently large. Abundance of Inner Life, and then wherever our lot is cast, love will be the rule of our action and the substance of our worship. Abundance of Inner Life, and then the imperatively needed heart righteousness — that is, salvation — will surely be ours. We walk securely and joyfully in wisdom's ways when the soul is strong enough to master the flesh. The world can neither enrich nor rob a man who has realized his spiritual possibility, whose life is one with God. Abundance of Inner Life, and then the kingdom of heaven is at hand, because life in God is life in heaven;

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and if we live in God we shall serve gladly and helpfully all the family of God.

On this doctrine of Inner Life, and on no other, all the teachings of Jesus can be strung like jewels on a single thread of gold. The Beatitudes are not blessings upon belief; they go deeper than conduct and they demand more than service. They go down to the roots of life, as become the teachings of the Master of Inner Life. The wonderful parables are pictures of life. Abundance of Inner Life is the lesson of the Leaven, the Mustard Seed, the Wise Virgins, the Used Talents, the Good Samaritan; the lack of life, the undoing of Prodigal, Unjust Judge, and Foolish Virgins. The scattered sayings that shine as pearls of great price tell the same story: "If thy right eye offend, pluck it out," "Take heed, therefore, that the light which is in thee be not darkness," "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." Both repentance of sin and forgiveness of sinners, which stand at the beginning of salvation, issue necessarily from increase of Inner Life.

The keynote of the gospel is, therefore, the demand for Inner Life, abundance of soul, realization of spiritual possibility, life in God. All this, and Truth will light our pathway, Beauty will adorn our actions, and Love will worship God and serve man.

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The pulpit, however, must do more than sound the keynote of the gospel as a plea for Inner Life. It must administer the spirit of Jesus and make disciples; for he is the Life who most helps us to achieve that Inner Life which is salvation. Christianity is, indeed, a new commandment, but it is vastly more than this. It is *discipleship!* If only a new commandment, it would have been beautiful as a system of ethics, but not powerful as a religious dispensation. What makes Christianity a triumphant religion is not its law of love, but its love of Jesus.

A great American educator, in discussing the "Religion of the Future" recently, spoke appreciatively of the teachings of Jesus as a revelation which seems more wonderful as the ages pass. His testimony at this point is valuable, but his failure to go beyond the *message* to the *Master* himself is significant and unfortunate — significant because it represents a fundamental misconception which is common among certain classes, and unfortunate because his mistake diverts attention from what is essential in Christianity. The heart of Christianity, what gives it creative power, what sends out missionaries, what saves sinners, what builds churches, what produces character and enriches civilization is not so much a *precept* as a *personality*. The supreme thing is

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not Jesus' teachings, however superior, but the spirit of his life; not interest in an ethical code, but loving discipleship; not a system of doctrines about Jesus, but profound devotion to him as the Master of eternal life.

The church has a noble task to perform in teaching the Sermon on the Mount, but its sublime and supreme duty is to administer and incorporate the spirit of Jesus. Christian nurture does not consist mainly in learning his moral precepts as rules of conduct, but it consists chiefly in so telling the story of Jesus that his personality becomes a redemptive power in the lives of people. It was not interest in the "sayings" of Jesus that won Peter, stirred John, and converted Paul. It was a life: Jesus the Son of God.

The motive power of the Christian faith is not, therefore, didactic, but personal; the task of the pulpit, not to teach a code, but to impart the spirit of a life and inspire loyalty. The note of profound personal loyalty to Jesus as Saviour — what really makes a *Christian* — is lacking in the address to which reference has been made, and consequently it lies before us as an interesting philosophy of life. It is not, however, a gospel imparting life; for it does not equip us with vital and vitalizing loyalty; it does not actually make us religious, something the pulpit has done and must continue to do.

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One other matter must here receive brief attention. There are some eminent persons who contend that the exclusive emphasis placed on Jesus in the pulpit is narrowing the ethical life of the race. Other examples of human greatness and goodness also need equal attention. Christianity must be given a more cosmopolitan spirit. We must associate Jesus with such men as Socrates, Aurelius, Alfred, and Darwin in order to give variety, breadth, and power to our ethical and religious training. All this sounds well — when first heard! Surely we must avoid a narrow Christian faith. All the great sons of man must be fully appreciated. It is certainly unwise to try to exalt Jesus at the expense of other sublime characters. He is in no need of any praise built upon the neglect or sacrifice of others.

But when we devote the pulpit chiefly to Jesus, do we really condemn other leaders of mankind or foster ethical narrowness? Certainly not! We simply recognize his supreme fitness to do for men what the church is instituted to provide — to train people in piety, for discipleship to Jesus is the master stroke of spiritual training. Other lordly characters are not banished from our admiration by giving him exclusive attention in the work of Christian nurture. We simply use the name best fitted to fulfil the particular function of the in-

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stitution — the promotion of Christian character. By a true instinct the church has always appealed to him for leadership in things of the spirit because he was superlatively spiritual. Jesus is not our leader in laboratory or observatory. He cannot teach us how to build bridges or construct steamships. It is no discredit to him that he is not sought in these affairs, as it is no discredit to others that they are not given an equal place with him in the religious training of mankind.

The life of Jesus is best fitted to promote the definite work that the pulpit has in hand — religious edification and ethical training. His name is the greatest tool of life for character-making. The appeal to past history and present experience makes this clear. Ancient Greece had had four centuries of Socrates before it heard the gospel, but how soon, when that evangel sounded, did Jesus begin to do for Greeks what the great Athenian had never effected, and could never accomplish! And this is no discredit to Socrates, whose name we will ever honor and whose influence will always be precious. We simply recognize a historic fact and appreciate a radical difference of quality and function. Socrates a noble name? Yes! But it has never stirred a Xavier or a Livingstone to monumental missionary enterprises. To feed the roots of spiritual

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life in the soul — the special work of the church in all ages — Jesus, not Socrates, is of prime importance. Two thousand years have made this evident.

So, too, the Romans had Aurelius with them while Jesus was being preached to plain people in obscure places throughout his vast empire. And yet, it is a matter of undisputed history that Jesus recreated human lives, purified and gladdened human hearts, "made character," widely and effectively, where the influence of the imperial Stoic never moved a conscience to repent or caused a face to smile in mercy or sympathy. Aurelius a noble name? Yes. But it is not in his name that our Grenfells are working miracles of love today.

Again, teach the gospel of Jesus to one class of boys and the story of Alfred to another similar class, and let this training proceed on separate lines from father to son for a few generations, that the full fruitage may come to expression. Then note the permanent results in terms of moral life: the things that make for reverence and righteousness. No one needs to be told what the experiment would show. Alfred a noble name? Yes. But it is the story of Jesus that is transforming Japan.

Still again. Try the biography of Darwin on a score of cases of doubt, anger, petulance, cruelty, and heartache, common conditions of

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human life, where the gospel of Jesus does bless. The mere suggestion is enough to drive home the point of this contention. Human happiness depends more upon purity of heart than upon acuteness of intellect, valuable as this is; and Jesus purifies the heart with a supreme effectiveness that belongs to no other influence at work among men. Darwin a noble name? Yes! But thousands of hearts are made rich by love of Jesus where one mind is helped by the doctrine of evolution.

When we claim that Jesus should occupy a preeminent place in the pulpit, we do not necessarily imply that he exhausts the possibilities of human excellence, or that others are devoid of helpfulness in ethical training. The contention is simply this: that to accomplish the specific task for which the church is maintained, his life is uniquely and superlatively valuable and effective. No other name given among men is so well fitted to stimulate and strengthen noble motives, to arouse and refine spiritual sentiments, to create reverence and righteousness, to brace the will to serve and sacrifice, and to nurture the soul in faith and hope.

Therefore the answer is near at hand when people say that Jesus was helpful to the ancients, but that we now need, in addition to the gospel, other ethical ideals and documents more catholic

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and cosmopolitan. The appeal to history and experience just made is a decisive reply in the negative to this claim. The spirit of Jesus has always been the most cosmopolitan influence in the world. No other life compares with his in tender love, in limitless sympathy, in perfect unselfishness. Why turn from such a master to secondary personalities? Until men in trade and politics come a little nearer the Christian ideal, is it wise to intimate that the gospel of Jesus has been outgrown?

A vast experiment in the use of the life of Jesus has been made during the past two thousand years on several millions of millions of human beings. The results, imperfect as they have been, justify the world-wide enterprise. The glorious output of Christian nurture in many lands, with numerous races and under great difficulties, make a record over which every disciple may well be proud. With all its imperfections, it is a splendid record, not of defeat and disgrace, but of human happiness and civic progress. It would, indeed, be a grievous mistake to attribute all the factors of civilization to the gospel or the church, but it would be manifestly unscientific to ignore so supreme a fact of human history as the life-giving influence of Jesus.

In spite of obscuring dogmas and confusing rites, nevertheless, all through the ages, the

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simple life-story of Jesus has operated on the hearts of men with vast power and for infinite good. Even under the most adverse conditions, ethical results have been accomplished that are nowhere else found. It is too late to abandon a world-policy so widely fruitful of human excellence. The basic problems of human life remain the same from age to age. The gospel cannot be outgrown until human nature radically changes; until repentance and righteousness, love and mercy, faith and hope, become valueless. While they are needed, that is, while human society endures, Jesus will be not only our supreme teacher, but our loved Master, for he stands supremely for what is supreme in human life. And to make men disciples of Jesus, to administer and incorporate the spirit of his life, must still be the chief function of the pulpit.

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VI. ITS PEWS: THE CONGREGATION AT WORK

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TOPICS

MISTAKES OF THE AVERAGE LAYMAN — CRISIS OF THE CHURCH — TWO ILLUSTRATIONS — THE CONGREGATION THE STRENGTH OF PROTESTANTISM — A CROWD IS NOT A CONGREGATION — WHAT DOES SITTING IN THE PEW MEAN? — FULL PEWS OR FULL PEOPLE? — CHURCHES GROW BY WORKING — WHAT ARE RELIGIOUS WORKS? — THE WORK THAT WASTES — FAITHFUL WOMEN BUT RECREANT MEN — DOING SOMETHING OR BEING SOMETHING — PHILANTHROPY NO SUBSTITUTE FOR DISCIPLESHIP — CHURCH MEMBERSHIP MUST MEAN MORE — SUCCESS DEPENDENT ON THE LAITY — BETTER DISCIPLES RATHER THAN MORE MEMBERS — SHALL AMERICA BECOME ROMAN CATHOLIC? — APPEAL TO PROTESTANT LAYMAN — WHAT THE AVERAGE MAN MUST DO — BETTER LIFE THROUGH THE CONGREGATION.

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VI. ITS PEWS: THE CONGREGATION AT WORK

OUR misfortune is that the average Protestant layman is not in the congregation of the church, or if he is there, he is not at work as he ought to be. Although he may be a nominal church member or pewholder, he does not realize the importance of the church. He does not clearly see or fully appreciate the fact that it provides the chief motives, ideals, restraints, and disciplines of life: that it stands guard over the sanctities of the home; that it safeguards property with protections that no police force provides; that it contributes to the market-place the moral influences most needed there; that it equips the court with principles of justice without which human society would dissolve; and that it constantly replenishes the enthusiasms that support education. The Church of Tomorrow, by a stronger pulpit and more spiritual policies, must make its members and attendants realize how serious present conditions are. Judgment must begin at the house of God itself.

The average man, who is not at present a church attendant, does not fully realize his responsibility to the church. He often merely

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throws it a few coppers when he ought to give it his best life. He discourages its minister by spending more on a single day's outing than the whole amount that he annually doles out to the cause of religion. He weakens the pulpit by decreasing his subscription as his income increases, so that many preachers actually receive a smaller daily wage than unskilled day laborers! He drives good men out of the ministry by turning his back upon the church on Sunday and breaking one or more of the Ten Commandments every week day. He prevents superior young men from entering the sacred calling because his flagrant neglect of the church makes the college student feel that these present conditions, for which he is chiefly responsible, have robbed the clerical office of dignity and power. By his example he effectually leads his children to ignore, if not despise, religion, for they do not long honor as sacred what the father treats with indifference. Because he shirks his spiritual duties, his wife is compelled to resort to bazaar, rummage sale, or oyster supper in order to pay the minister's meager salary, when long overdue; and no wonder that she, too, in time, lays down the heavy task and becomes a churchless heathen like her husband!

The problem for all friends of civilization as well as Christianity to consider at once is

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this: to realize first of all how serious the problem actually is, and then to see what can be done to remedy the existing deplorable situation. Those inside the congregation must be stirred to greater zeal and liberality, while those outside must be made to feel that their indifference to the church means a great loss to themselves and a grave injury to the community. There is at present a good deal of foolish discussion about "the unchurched." But these people are not so much unchurched as they are non-religious or irreligious. They do not deserve coaxing: they need condemnation, contrition, conversion. The trouble is not that the church does not want them, but rather that they do not care for the church.

The average man does not realize the crisis which the church faces today. He occasionally reads some statistical statement which seems to show that religion is more prosperous than ever before and that Christianity was never so strong as at present. But if all these optimistic statements are true, why are so many churches empty? Why smaller salaries for ministers while wealth multiplies and the cost of living increases? Why such frantic efforts to attract people into the pews? Why so many catch-penny enterprises to support preaching? Why such an alarming decrease in the number of young men entering the ministry?

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If Christianity is in such a flourishing and satisfactory condition, why so many divorces, scandals, defalcations, mobs, murders — so much political bribery, municipal corruption, business dishonesty, and legislative debauchery?

Even the multitude of philanthropic and reformatory activities, abounding everywhere, themselves reveal the impending crisis of the church. No sane man points in pride to the large number and immense size of jails and poorhouses as evidence of human progress. Humanitarian agencies (excellent in themselves) are largely necessary because religion is inoperative where it ought to be supreme; and it is inoperative because the average man has turned his back upon the church. He gives it no adequate part of his income, and he bestows upon it little time and no consecrated loyalty. The church is being damned in these days, for failing to serve humanity faithfully, by the very men who have robbed it of support or who have left it to follow the flesh and the devil! If the average man would only sacrifice for it and pour his life into it as he ought, a large part of the world's reformatory work would be unnecessary. Help the church to touch the hearts of the people with the spirit of Jesus — recreate life at its source and center — and then men will fast abandon follies and outgrow evils. What is needed is not so much

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a call to service, but a demand for consecration: out of the new heart will come the noble character and the helpful service.

We hear much about the relation of the pulpit to social problems. The relation is important and intimate, but not at all what it is sometimes represented to be. In the first place these problems exist very largely because the church has been rendered ineffective through the indifference of the people. If the masses were sufficiently religious these problems would rapidly dwindle or disappear. In the second place the pulpit, as has been pointed out, exists not so much to apply socialistic remedies as to generate ethical motives which are preventive of social disorders. Much of the loud talking at this point, both inside and outside the church, represents a proposed policy that begins at the wrong end. When the average man comes to realize his whole duty to the church, then all social problems will be placed in the way of speedy solution, so far as human imperfection permits. The problem of child labor, for instance, is fundamentally a religious problem. An adequate church will make such conditions impossible, but we cannot have that adequate church unless we have the loyal and effective cooperation of the average man — not as a pewholder, but as a pew occupant; not as a subscriber to its funds, but as a worshiper

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at its altar; not as a distant patron of its activities, but as a participant in its Sunday-school.

The crisis of the church is acute just at this point. The average man is looking and longing and laboring in every direction except the church for deliverance from pressing evils. But what is to become of the church, man's most effective tool for social service and personal excellence, when the average man insists that some other path is the highway to heaven? When forsaken by those who ought to equip it with power and lead it to victory, it is compelled to devote all its energies to the support of a minister with an ever-shrinking salary.

What, therefore, is to become of the church if the average man, instead of helping it to do great things, runs off in hot haste after some oriental vagary or gives himself to philanthropic enterprises that merely attack superficial symptoms? Is it fair to curse the church for its weakness, when many men of substance every Sunday morning speed away from it as fast as possible in automobiles, and those who plead for social justice turn their faces away from the one institution that does more than any other to make human society possible and to promote the moral sentiments that make just laws effective?

When we hear less about the relation of the pulpit to social problems and more about

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the obligations of the average man to the church, calling him to help it to the utmost that it may be all that it ought to be, then the problems of society will begin to be solved, because the deep spiritual roots of life will then begin to be fed. The one effective method of reform and progress is inward to the soul; when there is more Inner Life in the spirit of the master, all else will follow.

The average man does not realize that the crisis which the church faces means a crisis for civilization. Conditions are more serious than our optimists imagine, and the danger lies chiefly where seldom suspected. Two concrete examples, chosen out of a wide experience of similar cases, may throw a little light on this truly momentous subject.

I. A small city in the middle west, above the average in culture and respectability, has doubled in population during the last generation by normal growth, without material changes in race proportions. Its wealth is now tenfold greater than in 1875. Several hundred palatial homes now adorn its well-paved streets, along which many automobiles are active on Sundays — but they are seldom seen near the churches! Four small religious societies have died in this period and none been organized. All the church buildings now in use are in poorer repair than at the begin-

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ning of the period. The number of men now attending morning services is not as large as then; the salaries of the ministers are relatively smaller; and the churches do not today exercise so strong an influence upon the community.

The average man of Protestant inheritance in that town is at present comparatively indifferent to the cause of religion as represented by the churches. He seldom takes more than a perfunctory interest in their affairs. Probably he could not tell the difference between their creeds. His children in the high school would find difficulty in turning to any passage in the Bible. This has come about, not because the churches have been recreant, but because he has ceased to care for the things of the spirit, which the church represents.

Now does someone declare that the church is wholly to blame for this state of affairs? Somewhat to blame it surely is, because the weakness and narrowness of its minister, the over-emphasis of mere dogma, the petty financial methods of the congregation — these and other mistakes have, at least in many cases, helped to bring about this serious condition. But after all, is it fair and just to hold the church wholly responsible and allow a great number of influential but selfish and indifferent citizens to escape blame? Churchmen may

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need criticism, but those indifferent to the church deserve condemnation.

Let us make this clear by appeal to a similar case in another field: When you find a poor school in a village, where the teacher is paid a starvation wage, where parental indifference abounds, and where low ideals and customs prevail, do you hold the poorly paid and inadequately supported teacher wholly responsible? The truth is that it is not education that has failed, but chiefly that the people have failed. So, likewise, the ministers in that town must not be blamed because the average man never opens his Bible, seldom attends church, and is indifferent to what his boy does in the Sunday-school.

But the important point to be emphasized is this. The church crisis in that town means a serious social crisis, for which the average man is responsible. Inquiries about the fortunes of persons who were young people there two score years ago will call forth many a sad and melancholy story. This one? Divorced. That one? Died a drunkard. This one? In jail several times. That one? Ran away with another man's wife. This one? In prison for bribery. That one? A confirmed gambler. This one? Shot by his mistress. That one? A notorious swindler. Fortunately, not all replies would be like these, but an alarmingly

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large proportion, as the writer can certify from experience. By the side of the large jail that was new in 1875, another, twice as large, has recently been built. The jail committals have increased much more rapidly than the population. Its threshold shows increasing wear; those of the churches less!

II. Take another illustration from a neighboring state. Some forty years or so ago the member of the faculty of its great university who never went to church was a rare exception. Among the 500 convicts in its state prison there were, at that date, almost no college graduates. Today in that same university the members of the faculty who regularly attend some church and sacrifice for its support are in a decided minority! In the state prison over 100 of its 700 inmates are college men! The ratio has jumped from less than one per 100 to one in every seven! Certainly a most astonishing and alarming condition of affairs. It is not necessary to attempt to state the exact relation of cause and effect in this startling phenomenon. It will be well, however, if the average man will stop a moment and seriously ask himself whether his personal attitude to religion and the church is what it ought to be.

The civilization of a community is very largely determined by this test: What proportion of its people are found in its congregations

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and what is their Christian nurture in such congregations? The strength of Protestantism has been very largely due to the religious life developed in its congregations. The original impulse of the Reformation included these important elements: a demand that religion be taken out of the hands of special orders and given over to the people themselves; a demand that religion be freed from burdensome rites and senseless traditions and be made a training in repentance and righteousness of heart; a demand that religion shall more and more address itself to the redemption of humanity from sin and sorrow here and now, building up the kingdom of God at once on this earth; a demand that religion destroy despotism and promote liberty, foster the education of all the people and train citizens for the service of the state, enrich the home and send men into shop and market with more intelligence and higher character.

In such world results we find the glowing ambitions of men like Zwingli and Luther, Calvin and Knox, Cranmer and Socinus. The fruitful method by which their ideal and enthusiasm worked was *the congregation:* a resort to the people themselves. In the Anglican church it was by the use of "Common Prayer"; among the Lutherans, the prominence of secular leaders and popular instruction; with the

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Reformed and the Presbyterians, the large use of education and the insistence that religion mold civic affairs, while Independents of every variety, with Robert Browne, laid emphasis on "the congregation" as the sure way to reform without waiting for any other agency.

Now, this putting of the interests of religion into the hands of all the people by the reformers placed a heavy responsibility upon the laity. As we suffer in the democratic state today because so many men are recreant citizens, being only inhabitants or mere voters, so in the realm of religion the church and all the spiritual interests which it represents suffer because so many men are indifferent to pulpit and pew. The efficiency of a democracy depends upon the loyalty of all citizens; so the efficiency of Protestantism depends upon the loyalty of all laymen to the church.

This glance at history shows us that in any forward movement by the Church of Tomorrow the *Congregation* itself must be given prominence and effectiveness. If the men of the community cannot be brought into the congregation for worship and training and then sent out into the world as persuasive examples of piety to serve the world's needs, then the church is doomed, while the community itself will surely degenerate. The average man must enter the congregation, not simply as an idle

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listener to sacred music or pulpit eloquence, not simply as a curious observer of beautiful architecture and spectacular forms, but if he is to help bring in the kingdom of God, he must be there as a profoundly interested participant in its services and activities. If he is there as such a participant he will go out into the world and help to make it better.

The misfortune in the religious world today, which the Church of Tomorrow must remove, is that everything, as a rule, is arranged with reference to *drawing a crowd*, while the whole interest should center in the Christian nurture of the "Congregation." The "crowd" is of no consequence at all: curious, shallow, selfish, fickle, transient — with no brain to listen, no heart to respond, and no hand to serve. But the *congregation*, receptive to instruction, responsive to worship, loyal to the spirit of Jesus, enthusiastic for righteousness, generous with money, and still more generous with personal devotion — here we have the true church which creates private character and insures public peace.

The situation is lamentable, and a change of attitude and method is needed in several different directions. The churches themselves are very much to blame. The whole effort of official boards seems at present to be directed at one point: Whom can we call as our pastor

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that will draw a crowd? But that crowd may be a disgrace to religion and vanish tomorrow! The strength of the church does not depend upon a crowd, but upon the congregation, penitent of its sins, warm in its love of Jesus, and intent on doing God's service. Ministers themselves too frequently become worshipers of mere numbers, and bend all their energies, often by most sensational methods, to getting a large hearing—little better than a curious mob: more of a dishonor than a glory to the house of God. God's people need to be measured, not counted. The true test is not the numbers attracted, but souls purified and enlarged! What a church really contributes to the higher civilization of a community comes largely out of its corporate life as a congregation, from the training given under the leadership of its pulpit to its members, by which the will of God is first made to prevail in their own lives and then in the affairs of men at large.

The average man in the street is himself exceedingly guilty at this point. He waits to be amused and entertained. He remains away from the church because it is not filled; he would go if it were crowded. He complains because the new minister is not a good story teller and "he only shakes hands from the elbow down." He boasts that he would like to hear a smart talker, but he does not care

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for "piosity." As a result, the minister has no crowd and this man has no part in the life of the church. He seriously misunderstands the task of religion, and also his own need. He does not so much need preaching as discipline through service, nurture through discipleship, development through cooperation, growth by activity. Listening to sermons will not cure his irreligion: the only thing that will save him is zealous participation in the life of the congregation.

A crowded church is certainly pleasant for the preacher and encouraging to the deacons. But the question at once arises, Why is the crowd there? Full pews are more satisfactory than empty ones. But there is something more important than getting people into the pews. It is getting the Holy Spirit into the people. The praise of the new minister — "He has filled the pews" — is good as far as it goes. But the next and more important thing to consider is this: With what has he filled these occupants of the pews? If attracted for any other purpose than religion, they will not remain long and they will be worthless while there. If there to worship God, not the minister or soloist, well and good. But if there to satisfy a mere curiosity or transient social craving, they are only spectators, and no real part of the congregation. For the true congre-

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gation of any church is composed of those pious souls who seek God and his forgiveness; who love Jesus and yearn to be more loyal disciples; who feel the misery of the world and long to heal it with their love.

A virulent distemper of the time is the common anxiety for "big" congregations. Success is often measured by a very false standard: the number of attendants brought into the church. The real test of the minister's work is this: What has he done to establish the kingdom of God? Sitting in the pew of a church is a good thing. The layman indifferent to religion ought to be made to realize that he is needed there. But his mere presence there is not enough. His supreme good and the supreme good of the community can be reached only as he is there to worship and serve the eternal Goodness. The tests to be applied are these: not the number attracted, but the Christian character created; not full pews, but full hearts; not words of praise for elegant diction, but yearnings of spirit for better life; not large contributions, but deeper consecration; not artistic music, but a nobler ideal; not an indolent satisfaction, but "a joy that is three parts pain"; not the approval of rich or poor, but making people conscious of their spiritual poverty that they may enrich the whole community.

What does it mean to sit in the pew on Sunday

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morning? That is the matter of prime importance. Are you there to help the minister pray, by taking a prayerful heart to church? If so, you are doing your part to make a real congregation. Are you there to help the minister preach, by showing a loyalty on stormy mornings which quickens his thought and warms his heart, so that he gives more than he planned, and you get more than you expected? If so, you become a co-evangelist with him in spreading the gospel. The pulpit is very dependent upon the pews for the sacred eloquence that converts and consoles. When asked: "Going to church to hear a great sermon?" the true disciple merely replied: "No! I am going to help our minister preach a sermon that will bring sinners to repentance!" An equally wise answer was given by another layman, who, when asked: "Will you come and hear our fine soloist today?" made answer: "No! But I shall gladly go and join your congregation in worshiping almighty God!" It is only the spirit of such men in the pews that makes preaching seem worth while and that enables the church to be an adequate power for good.

It is well, then, to have the church filled, if the hearts there present are filled with the spirit of hope, joy, love. A small church well filled is always better than a large auditorium with a few people. In fact, a small church is,

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in many respects, most suitable for Christian nurture and most productive of religious results, provided its efforts are directed, not merely to financial problems, but to the development of the religious life. A few people, scattered over a large floor space, do not constitute *a congregation*. To kindle the flame of devotion there must be personal contact. When the mystic neurons in the brain separate far apart, consciousness ceases; the mechanism must be closely linked for thought to operate. So in the church; the Holy Spirit abhors a vacuum! Hearts are cold until they touch. The water in disconnected puddles stagnates. People must sit close together to make an easy channel for the flowing of the river of life.

Every minister realizes at times that he is powerless, being only a performer in the house of God, because he has no real *congregation*. The people before him would make a congregation if in "a little upper chamber," like the one hundred and twenty loving disciples who were crowded into a small room. But when scattered and detached, no corporate life can exist and his message falls powerless, while the people go home unfed and unblessed. What, therefore, makes a religious congregation is not numbers, but the quality and proximity of the people. Even a few simple hearts, close together and imbued with love of God and man;

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few pews, but these filled with people who themselves are filled with the spirit of religion — they constitute "a congregation of the Lord," providing a glorious opportunity for the preacher and making a noble contribution to the higher life of the community.

It is probably the craving for the inspiration which comes, not only from the size, but the compactness, of an assemblage of people, which presents to many ministers at the present time the temptation to indulge in sensationalism. The man in the pulpit naturally desires full pews, not only because he wishes "to extend the gospel," but because he realizes that he needs the people there in order that he may do his best work. All this is true. But let him beware, lest he yield to a very subtle and common temptation; for if he does yield to it, he will find no lasting satisfaction and accomplish no permanent good.

Every legitimate means should be taken by the preacher to fill the empty pews. But all such means should have a high ethical quality and a distinct religious purpose. A crowd gathered by curiosity will disintegrate as soon as that curiosity is satisfied. People brought together to see fireworks do not make a good company for instruction in righteousness. A mass meeting of those who simply hate the rich will not put on the yoke or take up the

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cross of Christ or repent of their own spiritual poverty. The motive of assembling must be religious if the result of coming together is to be Christian nurture. If the aggregating impulse is frivolous the meeting will have no ethical value. The minister who forsakes his spiritual throne and simply appeals to the world will never lead anyone away from his worldliness.

The true friends of the minister in the pews ought to help him in this line. A few alert, tactful, and enthusiastic laymen can accomplish wonders in building up a congregation simply by personal influence. And if laymen helped the minister in this way more frequently and more skilfully, he would have less temptation to resort to sensationalism. Just this personal interest by the laity in behalf not only of a larger but a more consecrated congregation is prolific of good in several directions. It is itself a valuable Christian training which gives grace and brings joy to the individual so engaged. It provides conditions which insure better sermons and more impressive worship. It is a valuable means of evangelization. One of the greatest blessings that we can bestow upon a person indifferent to the church, and one of the greatest benefits that we can bring to the community, is to take that Sunday drone out of his isolation or away from his pastime and

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make him an interested member of the congregation of some church of God. This will make him happier and every noble interest in the community stronger.

Such cooperation with the minister in order to fill the pews is a part of what is meant by a congregation at work for religion. But to be fruitful of good to the church and to the community, the spirit inspiring and shaping all this effort must be something broader than sectarian zeal and nobler than church pride. It must be enthusiasm for human betterment in the conviction that to bring men into the church and make them disciples of Jesus is the most effective way to establish the kingdom of righteousness on earth.

It is often vigorously asserted that the church must grow by working. Very true. But the important questions immediately arise: Working how, and working where? A good many earnest people today have come to feel that a great deal which passes as religious work at present is either non-religious or positively irreligious! And the spread of the conviction is probably keeping a large number of people away from the church. And in the Church of Tomorrow there must be a radically different policy as there must be a clearer conception of what really constitutes *religious work*. We must have a congregation engaged in religious enterprises

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and bringing religious results to pass. But what are religious enterprises? And what are religious results?

A few examples, taken from life, will illustrate the difference between true religious work in which a church ought to engage, and various other activities, many of which may be good in themselves, but inexpedient or inappropriate for the church to undertake. Here, for instance, is a group of women in a vestry preparing carpet rags that are to be woven into rugs and sold at a bazaar. This is dirty, disagreeable, and somewhat dangerous work. To engage in it at all, women must surely have decided zeal for religion and earnest loyalty to the church. And then, after having spent a good many hours at such labor, they buy these rugs, made from their own rags and largely by their own hands, and they usually pay for them an exorbitant price!

Now, we must all admire the superb devotion of these women. Although we may criticise the policy that compels them to do these things, they are not responsible for the conditions which seem to make such efforts necessary. They are faithfully doing their part to keep the church open and the pastor's salary paid. They toil and sacrifice that the gospel may be preached at home and on foreign fields. All honor to such noble women!

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But are not their husbands the biggest pagans in the world to allow such a situation to exist and continue? Why not manfully put their hands into their pockets and provide for the support of the church, instead of compelling their wives and daughters to earn the money to pay the organist or to meet the expense of painting the meeting house? This would be far cheaper, for the present policy is financially as wasteful as it is burdensome to the consecrated women of the parish. And the shame of it! If the church is worth anything, why not pay for its support in a worthy manner?

But the point chiefly to be emphasized here is this: these things are in no sense *religious work!* This labor may wipe out a temporary financial deficit, but it leaves a permanent spiritual deficit. Sewing carpet rags in a vestry is no part of Christian nurture. All this work on the part of the good women simply makes it a little easier for men to neglect the church. They need not give it any money, for their wives will somehow earn it! The best thing that could happen for the cause of religion in America would be for all such earnest church-women to go at once on a strike, refusing longer to do menial work simply to keep the church doors open! This would soon force laymen to face their obvious duties and support religion in a direct and manly manner.

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No greater misfortune besets the cause of vital Christianity in our country than the unseemly policy for the maintenance of the church. And no greater mistake burdens the popular mind than the widespread notion that sewing carpet rags in a vestry, and all similar activities, to meet church expenses, are necessary or legitimate religious work. Of course whatever is done with a religious intent produces some religious results in the person so engaged. But surely, very much that now passes as religious work represents a misdirection of energy and a harmful church policy with a minimum of spiritual benefit.

The intent of such women, as has been stated, is most praiseworthy. And yet, the policy is wholly bad, not only financially, but spiritually. It is bad chiefly in the following respects. It perpetuates a low and false conception of the purpose and function of the church. What must a cynical pagan think when he discovers that the chief religious occupation of church-women is to sew carpet rags and do similar work to pay the salary of the minister of Jesus Christ! Money enough for theater, automobile, and circus, paid directly and gladly, but disciples of the lowly Nazarene indulging in grab bags, raffles, and guessing contests to raise money to send missionaries to convert his people! This policy alienates

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many from the church; it wastes in mere chores energies that ought to be put to better use (Bible study or even general culture); and it prevents these women from doing real religious work.

The contrast between such ecclesiastical chores and the true religious service, which ought to characterize the congregation at work, is evident and pleasing. In spite of all such unfortunate policies, saintly women still abound, who are ministering angels though unmarked by special garb or affectations of pious speech. Their hearts are ever kept tender by the gracious worship and inspiring prophecy of the church, and as a result they are themselves always active on errands of mercy; taking into their home for an afternoon the small children of a weary mother that she may have a needed outing; carrying to some dying friend a few flowers in the name of the church and speaking a tender word of prayer to make the departure on the long journey easier; reading some great Bible passages to the lonesome invalid who needs such comfort and cheer; laying hold of a wayward girl with sympathetic tact and quietly guiding her feet toward the Master who cheers while he chastens; calling upon the newly arrived stranger within the neighborhood and so displaying the grace of courtesy that a church home is soon found; distributing generous

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appreciation to all those who are doing heroic things in hidden places and so helping to bring in the kingdom of God; and everywhere shedding abroad by kind word and generous deed the spirit of him who went about doing good — working the miracles of love that redeem the world.

These and only these are the religious works which the Church of Tomorrow must emphasize and inspire. No machinery, no committee, no money is needed in a majority of cases, just a heart made loving by discipleship of him who was Love. A church that sends out men and women to do these things will have no financial deficit.

Illustrations of the radical difference between secular activities undertaken for church support and real religious work for the redemption of the world are innumerable and close at hand. One man, who never attends church and has no vital interest in the religious life, is, however, enthusiastic in behalf of a Men's Club and energetic in making its "annual spread" a social success. He greatly enjoys "working for religion" by eating a hearty supper! Some ministers encourage many similar enterprises under the impression that these things are religious works and helpful to the church. But the fruits of the spirit do not grow out of a gastronomic root! The way to

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a man's pocket may be through his stomach, but the spirit of God does not travel that way. The prodigal returned, not when well fed, but when hungry. Nightmare may follow a church supper, but not repentance of sin.

We are told that we must get the men into the church in some way. But how can merely satisfying an appetite convert people to Christ? What begins in worldly interest is not likely to end in Christian character. Religious means must be used to produce religious results. There is no method of indirection by which men can be trapped and brought unawares into the kingdom of Christ. Whosoever *will* may come. The heart must feel and the will act. We become religious by our own personal choice to be religious.

Some other man, however — and thank God he is everywhere even in these days of big battleships and little men! — does actually do genuine religious work. He makes it clear, wherever he is, not by boastful word but by quiet deed, that he is profoundly interested in religion and the church; he is in his pew regularly and when it is hard for him to be there, demonstrating to his neighbors and his children (no small part of their spiritual training) that religion is a matter of vital concern with him; he so orders his life during the week that Sunday shall be reserved for its noblest uses

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and church attendance is therefore treated as a supreme obligation and as a joyous privilege; he gives himself faithfully to the task of religious education in the Sunday-school, feeling that the glory of the Church of Tomorrow will lie, not in its trust funds, but in the consecrated hearts of its young people; he welcomes into his soul on Sunday morning the uplift of worship and the wisdom of prophecy, and then during every following weekday he translates these spiritual verities into life, making his business and his recreation conform to the gospel, and ever holding himself ready to lend a hand that his love may help a brother or to insist that justice be done between man and man, in order that righteousness may be established on the earth.

Now this man is engaged in true religious work. He must, indeed, work for religion, because a loyal disciple of Jesus. He represents what the congregation at work must be and do. Moreover, to do all this, no elaborate parish machinery is necessary. Just a heart full of love, forever replenished by the church, and when opportunity opens the door and makes the demand, the healing and refreshing tide will flow forth and immediately find its way to the place where most needed.

Therefore, to those who are in these days forever demanding that the church *do* something

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for people, let it be said, once for all, that the church does most for the children of God when it helps them *to be something* worthy of their divine inheritance. Then the doing will surely follow as the day follows the sunrise. A great deal that we now hear and read on this subject shows how erroneous the popular conception is respecting the true function of the church. Just as though it does nothing when it refreshes wearied hearts by its worship! Just as though it does nothing when it makes a sinner penitent and turns him into a sober husband and useful citizen! Just as though it does nothing when it reclaims a young man and makes him a loyal disciple of Jesus! Just as though it does nothing when it cleanses and recreates life at its source and center and sends forth a noble character into the world! These contributions are really worth more to mankind than superficial charities that only touch the material conditions of life.

We recently heard very much about the Institutional Church. The movement in this direction called attention to obvious defects in the common administration of religion — the lack of practicality and catholicity. It represented the broadening social impulse and enthusiasm of the time, which demands that something obviously helpful to society be actually done. All this was in a way well and good.

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However, there was even here not only limitation, but also danger. We must keep the fact in mind that religion is a corporate life and that piety must create wholesome social structure, but the experiments in this direction soon made it obvious that to *institutionalize* religion overmuch is to injure it. Adding wheels without increasing motive power really retards the progress of civilization and Christianity.

The "always-open church" soon lost its spiritual vision and its special power because the kitchen and the stage, the old clothes and the soup counter distracted attention from the soul. The "church of humanity" sent men and women on errands of mercy as long as the momentum of grace lasted. But works of charity are no substitute for repentance of sin, and only discipleship perpetuates permanent service. The Church of the Carpenter attracted workmen for a time, but people soon learned that in the "congregation" they need to forget their secular tasks and remember only what they are as sinful men and what they ought to be as children of God.

If the church properly nourishes the spiritual roots in the hearts of the people, then the members of its congregation will do the things that ought to be done, wherever they may be. If a need for a boys' club in the town exists, it will be organized. If a protest against a

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lawless liquor dealer is needed, it will be made. If a movement against child labor is necessary, it will be inaugurated. If a free reading-room ought to be established, it will be opened. And the cause of religion will be advanced by all such activities. But we must be careful not to try to reverse the divine order. Simply getting people to labor in these lines will not strengthen the church or save their souls. First seek the kingdom of God and then all these things will be added. The paramount duty of the church is to put the grace of God into the heart.

Whatever committees, few or many — and there must be some; whatever bazaars, frequent or seldom — and some may be useful; whatever machinery, much or little — but never any more than necessary, this supreme fact must always be borne in mind: the congregation is at work for religion only when its methods and aims are spiritual: to help a soul, not simply to pay a church debt; to elevate the general moral tone of the community, not simply to provide it recreation; to make sinners repent and sufferers rejoice, not simply to increase church attendance.

A truth that needs repeated emphasis today is this (and reference has been made to it several times in these pages): philanthropic activity is no substitute for Christian nurture.

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Helping others is a necessary expression of the religious life, and such service has decided educational value along spiritual lines if prompted by the religious spirit. But today there is more danger that the sources of personal piety will dry up than that children will starve or go naked. The mood of the hour is intensely humanitarian. It is easy to enlist workers for any charitable enterprises, but the merely sympathetic heart is not necessarily devout — often not even especially moral. Many very selfish and superficial natures are excessively sentimental. It is so easy to hand out money from an overflowing purse; so easy to go slumming — *when it is the fashion;* so easy to give one's old clothes to beggars.

All this, however, may not mean any moral earnestness, and in many cases these activities neither develop the religious life of the one nor bestow real benefit upon the other. On the other hand, to repent of one's sins, to put on the yoke of Christ and learn the great lessons of humility and meekness, to sacrifice daily for the things that are pure and noble, enduring hardship like a good soldier of the cross — these are things really worth doing, for they add not only to the saving graces of the soul, but also to the enduring life of the commonwealth. Along such lines, and only along such lines, lies the work of the congregation of the Church

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of Tomorrow. If it perform well this task, whatever other things need to be done will be accomplished.

The point always to be borne in mind and emphasized is this: the church must make membership in it mean something great and noble in character and helpfulness. Herein lay the power and from this fact flowed the success of the early church. This largeness and fruitfulness of spiritual excellence first, and then everything else follows as a matter of course. First of all a blameless private life, an honorable public service, a just business policy; speech pure, courage abundant, patience perfect, love constant, character noble. Lives such as these are really the only witnesses that the gospel needs. If sent out from its pews in abundance, the church renders thereby its greatest service to the world. The more they abound, the nearer we shall be to the solution of all "social problems." There will be little need of sensational methods when the church is more successful in making true men and women, who, wherever placed, show that they have learned from Jesus the supreme secret of life: his "mildness and sweet reasonableness."

The people in the pews, more than the minister, have the success of the church and the honor of religion in their hands. They can undo in a month all the preaching and praying

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of the most eloquent and saintly minister for a whole year. The scandalous life of one church member will neutralize the good influence of the best sermon ever delivered. A single tax-dodger, sitting in a front pew, is a greater obstacle in the way of piety than a score of so-called infidels. The unfaithfulness of laymen will render powerless the faith for which the church stands. The world is quick to judge every institution of religion, not by its ancient creed, but by the conduct of its present congregation. The effectiveness of religion is determined, not simply by the pious feelings of the people while in the sanctuary, but more largely by the respect which they show for the moral law in their homes and shops, on the street and the market. It is almost impossible for a minister to pull men into his church if it contains persons for whom he has to apologize.

On the other hand, the noble life of a pew-holder gives to the message of the pulpit great effectiveness. The influence of the congregation in winning support for the church and in making a moral impression upon the community is many sided. In the first place, the consciousness that he is surrounded, as he stands in the pulpit, by men and women who exemplify the gospel of Jesus, makes every man a more persuasive preacher. The glowing faces

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of the people before him who really live his message is the greatest inspiration that ever comes to the pastor of a church. Nothing so paralyzes prophetic speech as the presence of prominent members who are a grievous disgrace to the church.

In the second place, the good lives in the congregation will make a weak sermon strong by the evidence which they afford that what the minister is saying in a stumbling manner is the glorious gospel of the blessed God. The eloquence and courtesy of the caretaker will not make a garden popular if there is little of beauty to be seen there. But if the flowers and plants are superior in character, people will flock to the place though the keeper be a very ordinary man. So that, the people in the pews not only help the preacher to deliver a better sermon, but they also help to make that sermon powerful and fruitful in the lives of all hearers. The moral quality of the congregation drives home the lesson from the pulpit.

The people in the pews little realize how much harm comes to the church and the community because the congregation is not at work, either within or without the sanctuary, in the proper spirit or with adequate earnestness. To mention here only one aspect of this important matter — its influence upon the ministry itself. Let the people in the pew consider for a moment

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how it looks to the man in the pulpit! He sees before him men who have abundance of time for three or four lodges or fraternities, but when he asks them to do a little real religious work they refuse because they are too busy! He sees women who give themselves without stint to cards, clubs, theaters, and receptions, but when he pleads for some personal attention to the religious training of their children, he is met with the excuse that they do not have the time!

Consider how this looks to the minister — so faithful to business, but so faithless to the church! So anxious to make money for the children, but so indifferent to his efforts to give them Christian nurture! So intent on enjoying the luxuries of life, but so careless of the moral and spiritual interests of the community! So willing to pay his clerk a good wage, but so niggardly with his minister! So ambitious that his daughter excel in music and his son win in sport, but willing that both grow up ignorant of the Bible and veritable pagans at heart, so far as personal experience or parental example goes! So insistent that his friend shall not be badly treated by his employer, but ready to allow the church to behave most shamefully to its pastor! While such conditions continue, no wonder that few superior young men are entering the Christian ministry!

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Some over-confident optimists are constantly reminding us of the many millions of men and women who belong to the churches of the land, and of the millions of children in the Sunday-schools. On their face, the figures are most encouraging. But there is a deeper matter seldom touched: What does church membership really mean with a majority of these people? What does Sunday-school attendance really mean with many of these young people? It would be far better for our nation were there fewer church members, provided these were better disciples of Jesus. One million, actually living the gospel, would be a greater power for righteousness than ten million merely nominal Christians. The important thing is not the number of children in the Sunday-schools, but what training do they there receive? Are they actually taking the great teachings of the Bible into their lives and making them a rule of action? Are they growing up with high ideals of private virtue and public duty, with respect for age, reverence for law; with the spirit of humility, self-sacrifice, and public service? It would be better if we heard less bragging about the numerical strength of the church, and felt more anxiety that church membership should mean something worth while.

In ages past the church called the world to its judgment seat and passed severe sentence

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upon its follies and vices. Today the world is calling the church to the bar of public opinion and demanding that it give an adequate reason for its continued existence. The church cannot justify itself by its stately edifices, eloquent oratory, artistic music, impressive ritual, social standing, or benevolent activities. The keenly practical world will apply one stern test. What is your output? What contribution are you making to the world? We need everywhere men of honor and honesty. We need boys who can be trusted and young men who can resist temptation. We need public servants who will not steal and captains of industry who will not rob. We need men who will be sober husbands and just neighbors. We need women who care more for simplicity than for fashion, more for good books than for questionable operas, more for the high things of character than for a swifter automobile. To prosper and do its work in the world the Church of Tomorrow must meet these ethical demands.

With no intention of giving offense to Roman Catholics, nevertheless an urgent appeal ought to be made to Protestant men, such as is at present nowhere heard. Do you want America to become Catholic, a dependency of the Pope of Rome? It needs no second sight to understand that this will come about in the comparatively near future, unless a radical change

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is made in the actions and attitudes of the Protestant men of our land. What succeeds in the long run is not necessarily the best, but the most effective. A second-class faith, backed by a first-class enthusiasm, will crowd aside the first-class faith backed by a cold heart. The future will belong to the loyal Catholic who works for his church rather than to the indifferent Protestant who neglects his church. A cruder faith, with zeal and organization, has more "fitness to survive" than a nobler truth which men hold with indifference. Catholicism as a living belief, however erroneous, will crowd aside Protestantism as a dead tradition. Protestant men are today, by their neglect of the church, taking the very course that will put Catholicism in the saddle in our country in a few score years.

The coming age will have a church, but it will not necessarily be a Protestant church because the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth Rock, or because our Revolutionary forefathers were nearly all Protestants, or because Protestantism is more in keeping with science and democracy. What that church will be will depend upon the loyalty of believers today. If Protestant men continue their present indifference, if they absent themselves from the congregation and shut their purses, if they neglect religion in the home and ignore the Christian training

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of their children, the Catholic Church will dominate the land. No more serious problem lies before our Protestant ministers than this: to awaken laymen to a consciousness of the danger which threatens Protestant America!

The pulpit needs to cry aloud to every careless and selfish descendant of Puritan, Huguenot, and Covenanter: Do you want the principles for which Cranmer labored and Cromwell fought; the liberty of which Milton sang and for which Knox thundered; the separation of church and state, insuring freedom of conscience and worship, for which William of Orange contended and by which Roger Williams directed his noble statecraft — do you want these rich treasures to be scattered to the four winds? If not, you must bestir yourselves both on the Sabbath and on weekdays and outdo the Catholic neighbor in loyalty to your church! If you continue to live an idle, selfish life on Sunday morning, while he goes regularly to mass, your children will have to fight all those battles over again.

Protestant men owe no greater duty to civilization and posterity than to see to it that the church of their fathers shall be maintained. The situation is grave, and every Protestant minister needs to sound a word of warning that will arouse our slumbering, recreant laymen. For they must be made to realize that,

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unless they work in the congregation of our churches, the glorious heritage of Protestantism, that cost so much in tears and heartaches and is as much needed among men today as ever, will vanish from the earth.

The average man must be made to feel that his place on Sunday morning is in a church pew, with a teachable mind, a devout heart, and a generous hand. His presence there will not only help the minister preach and pray, but his very church-going is a public testimony, of no small importance, in behalf of everything good that civilization represents. Property will be safer, life more secure, and business more honest. That he is there when it costs an effort will educate his children to respect the sanctities of religion and make it more certain that they become disciples of Jesus and live a good life.

Parents ought to participate in the Christian nurture of their children, who need to be taught by example that religion is the supreme concern of life. A child will not long respect the church that the father never attends. Parental indifference robs the Sunday-school of effectiveness. We can have no real progress in religious education until fathers and mothers assume a new attitude toward the Sunday-school. A new interest must spring up at this point if the rising generation is to have a conscience

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adequate for the tasks of modern life. The Church of Tomorrow must compel the men, especially, to realize that they must give themselves personally to religion if their children are to be given the best preparation for life. To shirk here is to place a serious handicap upon the child.

And somehow, the average man, so indifferent today, must be made to see that, by his neglect of the church, he is losing the very best part of life. To be there in the pew is to have the horizon of the mind broadened by consideration of great themes and inspiring characters. To be there in the pew is to have thought and feeling directed into new channels, which means rest and recreation, so that one goes forth on the morrow better prepared for the waiting secular tasks. To be there in the pew, communing with God, listening to the message of Jesus, feeling the glory of the Immortal Hope, entering into the corporate life of the congregation — this is to shed the petty anxieties and escape the low ambitions of shop or field, and be at home in the wideness of God's mercy and in the perfect peace of his indwelling love.

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